AFTER EVE

THE NEW FEMINISM

BY ALAN GRAEBNER

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BY ALAN GRAEBNER

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Manufactured in the United States of America

For the three who taught me most:

R.N.G.

D.H.K.

M.K.G.

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PREFACE

Just Who Does He Think He Is, Anyway?

This book would have astonished and irritated me had I happened to pick it up in an idle moment ten years ago. Today it strikes me as hardly radical enough. What happened between then and now is simply that I changed my mind. I found that beliefs and expectations I had taken for granted—attitudes one acquires in growing up and usually never reflects upon—were simply untenable when subjected to rigorous analysis. To explain this reversal, which in turn explains much of this book, it may help to be briefly autobiographical.

Unfortunately for those with a taste for dramatics, my change of mind was a prosaic, rather pedestrian affair. I cannot recall any morning in which I looked into the mirror and said to myself for the first time, "Today I am going to be a feminist." Instead, in responding to various situations and influences, I gradually and often unconsciously shifted my view. Sometimes I did not realize I had moved until I noticed my incredulity at remarks of friends and colleagues whose attitudes I formerly shared.

Three factors were most influential. One was the search

by the woman I am closest to for a vocation satisfying to her. The search included, belatedly, the abandonment of one profession to retrain for medical school and, ultimately, practicing medicine itself. The decisions and the commitments to support them were made piecemeal, separated, and spread over nearly a decade. I had time to acclimate myself with reasonable grace to patterns of thinking and of living I had not at first anticipated.

A second influence results from my profession, for by trade I am a historian and a college professor. Nearly by accident I became aware that focusing on women in American history is an interesting and revealing way to dissect our society in both past and present. It is a subject rewarding to study and to teach. Furthermore, college campuses brought me in contact with large numbers of young women at a point in their lives when the stresses placed by society on women are often obvious and sometimes cruel.

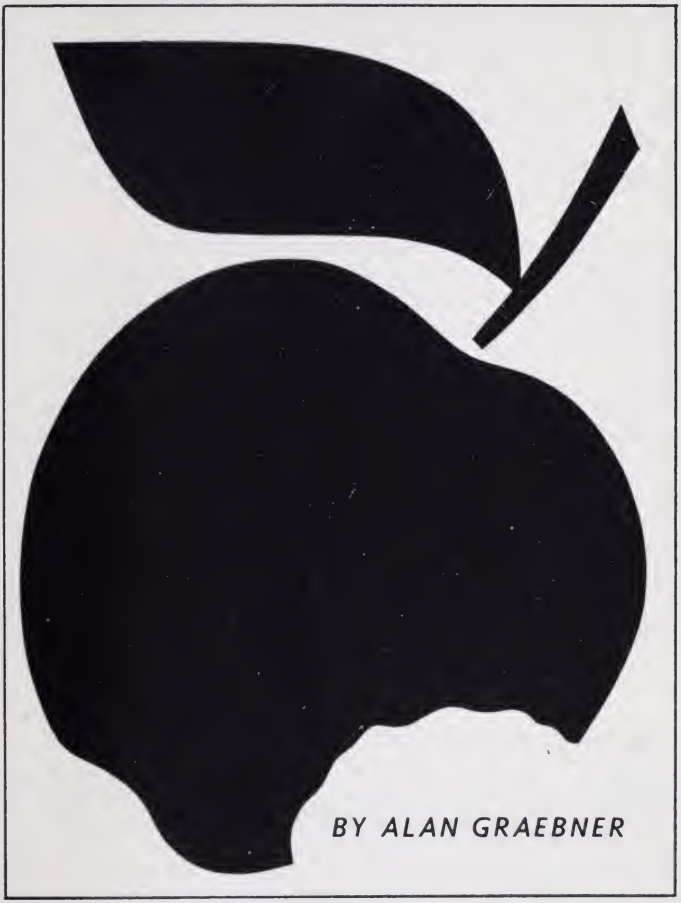
In sum I was predisposed toward the third influence, the women's liberation movement, before I learned of it. But it named things I had only felt, scrutinized things I had only glanced at, and forced me to more disciplined thinking about women.

By certain peculiar circumstances, then, I have been allowed to come to grips with feminism by stages. This had advantages—frogs who jump out if dropped into boiling water will relax if cool water is heated slowly. The rise of a militant feminism has now made it impossible to be so leisured in coming to grips with the subject of women, but it is still possible to separate the various issues in order to grapple with them one at a time. This is what I have tried to do.

For me to pose as a spokesman for women's liberation would be to prove I misunderstand what it is all about. I have tried instead to act as a sympathetic reporter: to summarize what is being said and to offer a framework for analyzing it. In the end I have gone beyond reporting to suggest ways of judging not only the movement, but various responses to it. If the overall tone is optimistic and supportive, that is, I think, as it should be, for the movement is one that promises much good for individuals and for our society as a whole.

AFTER EVE

THE NEW FEMINISM



BY ALAN GRAEBNER

AFTER EVE STUDY GUIDE by LOIS M. SNOOK

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A Women's Lib book written by a man? You're kidding! Not at all a "proper study" for church people. What real feminist wants to hear her case put by a male? And what antifeminist wants to hear the case at all?

Few people are indifferent to the subject of women's liberation. Some feel keenly; some think they are neutral; some change their minds. The author of After Eve is a quite ordinary history professor who changed his mind about women's lib. He became conscious, because his wife decided to study medicine, of the difficulties women face in our society if they want to enter a "man's" field. Especially through his wife's experience, this man was led to look at the "woman question" with new understanding.

Alan Graebner's book, however, is not ordinary. After Eve is a thoughtful, reasonable, readable book which helps. It can help us see how we contribute to the problem, how we are all victimized by the problem, how we all stand to gain by the liberation of both women and men.

The objective in this study is to aid the individual reader or a group of Christian men and women (or teenagers) to read, to comprehend, to evaluate, to learn, to share, to debate, to grow. It is hoped that a study of After Eve will lead to some form of meaningful growth--perhaps a "consciousness-raising" series of experiences or an in-depth study of the issues of women's liberation felt most keenly by the members of the group. If people emerge from this study or the discussions with the same biases or prejudices they had in the beginning, the study has failed. We hope it won't.

ABOUT THE GUIDE AND ITS USE

Although this study guide addresses groups, an individual can easily adapt its suggestions to independent study.

The individual will find this guide helpful in 1) identifying what to look for when reading the book, or 2) providing a way of wrapping-up what has been read.

The group for study of After Eve may be 1) an existing group interested in studying an issue, 2) a group specifically convened to study this book, or 3) a group resulting from mutual interest generated by individuals having read the book.

The subject under consideration is appropriate to groups of adult couples and singles, senior high teens, and young adults. Existing groups choosing this study should remember that it is important for men and women to be involved together in discussing this mutual problem and sharing their insight.

Regardless of group size or meeting conditions, someone within the group must act as discussion starter, referee, gadfly, devil's advocate. The task of leadership may be shared or rotated in the group rather than carried by one person throughout the study. The leader's aim should be constant, however:

* to listen to the group's reactions and interpretations of the author's thought, to clarify and/or summarize
* to make sure the group takes seriously the author's arguments while expressing their own opinions and reactions.

When planning to use this book and guide for group study, a leader should be designated for the first meeting. That person should have read the entire book and be prepared to introduce it in an enthusiastic way, stimulating interest and curiosity. The leader should also plan for introducing the people to one another so that they will feel comfortable in the group. It should be the understanding of everyone (and said at times) that participants will read the chapters and be prepared to discuss Graebner's points as well as their own ideas.

After Eve will be controversial. People will want to argue with the author. When a group discusses the book, expect people to express a wide range of feelings. Whoever is the leader should try to exploit every comment by seeing what lies beneath the surface. Additional questioning may uncover assumptions or prejudices, which are often cloaked in sweeping generalizations or blanket indictments.

Allow hostility, anger, or other negative expression. As a leader, keep your cool. Encourage everyone to participate. Try to affirm everybody. Often by restating a comment you can clarify it. Listen a lot. As a leader, don't dominate. Be prepared to pick and choose among the questions in the guide, or discard them all in favor of pursuing a lively point you raised yourselves. Create an open atmosphere in which even the "male chauvinists" will feel free to speak.

OUR PRESENT OPINIONS AND ATTITUDES

A first goal should be to identify opinions people now hold on what it means to be a woman in our society, and that means both men and women should think about and share their ideas about "the place of women."

Suggested procedure:

1. Distribute a copy of After Eve to each person or couple. Ask people to read the first two chapters, pages 11-30, for next time, jotting down comments and questions, or marking statements they endorse or dispute.

2. Distribute lists of the following terms.

Women's Liberation	Patriarchal Society
Feminist	Acceptance as a Person
Sexism	Feminine
Male Chauvinism	Masculine

Ask people to volunteer their definitions for these terms and discuss the variations in their definitions. How do the differences reveal the attitudes in the group?

3. Ask someone to suggest why a study of women's liberation might be important for Christians? What is the image of women in the Bible? Is there debate about this image? Whoever is the leader should be familiar with Chapter 6 of Graebner's book. (In addition, Event magazine, December 1970, Dialog, Spring 1971, or Margaret Sitler Ermarth's Adam's Fractured Rib provide background on the use of Scriptures to keep women in their place.)

THE CONCEPT OF SOCIALIZATION (Chapters 1 & 2)

Identify the main themes and give special consideration to the concept of socialization, using the case study of Nancy as the focus.

Questions for discussion or further thought:

1. Do you agree with the author that the news media have made women's liberation into a joke? Why or why not? What effect, if any, have the media had on the movement?

2. The author mentions some examples of "built-in resistance to feminist ideas": "feminist ideas endanger the male world," "capable women seeking jobs means greater economic

competition," men's fears about what might happen to their marriages and the family, and others. Discuss these fears. Do you share any of them? Does the family seem threatened by women's liberation? What changes in family life would be welcome?

3. The author states: "To act as if child-care is the central concern of a woman's entire life is a sentimental holdover...unsupported by present-day society" (page 16). Do you agree? Disagree?

4. Do you think of yourself, your wife, daughter, sister, or mother as victimized? Why? Why not?

5. What does the author mean by socialization? Refer to page 18.

6. List the specific ways in which Nancy was socialized into the conventional image of a girl. What are the implications of her socialization?

7. Discuss the statement by psychiatrist Bruno Bettleheim, "Boys have no doubt that their school is intended, at least, to help make them a success in their mature life....But the girl is made to feel that she must undergo precisely the same training only because she may need it if she is a failure" (page 24).

8. What difference does it make that society defines a woman primarily as wife and mother? Can this be changed? Should it be changed? If society has developed limits for women, can these be overcome? How?

9. Are boys stereotyped, too, and often cast into molds for which they are unsuited in our society? Give examples.

FEMINIST VOICES IN THE LIBERATION MOVEMENT (Chapters 3 & 4)

Identify and evaluate the main themes, and discuss the types of feminist voices in the liberation movement.

Questions for discussion or further thought:

1. Discuss the statement: "Piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity then were the building blocks for the pedestal on which women were placed in the 19th century." Do you agree with the author that the propositions on page 35 are statements you can still hear anywhere today? What does this imply about "progress" for women?

2. The author suggests that the arguments today between feminists and antifeminists are not between advocates of change and advocates of stability, but arguments over the rate of change. Do you think we should "hit the accelerator" or "apply the brakes"? Why?

3. The author indicates feminists can be categorized by their position on a continuum in regard to definition, strategy, and tactics. Draw three long horizontal lines on the chalkboard; and mark the three lines as on page 43. Ask: What is a woman? Ask people to indicate where on the line their definition would rank. Do the same with the questions: How much should society change to give women their due? What sort of tactics should be employed to achieve goals? Are people in your group reformist, radical, or somewhere in between? Any surprises?

4. Refer to the author's discussion of the proposals of the "reform" feminists (NOW Bill of Rights) on page 45. Open the abortion question. What are the arguments pro and con? Has anyone changed his mind about this problem lately? Why? More on this subject in Chapter 7.

INSTITUTIONALIZED DISCRIMINATION (Chapters 5 & 6)

Identify and evaluate the main themes. Focus on institutionalized discrimination against women--especially in employment and wages, taking a particular look at the church as a case study of institutionalized sexism.

Questions for discussion or further thought:

1. Do you find the author's evidence for discrimination against women in education and employment convincing? Do the experiences of women in the group confirm the author's evidence? What are their experiences of discrimination, if any? Do some women in the group not feel that they have been discriminated against? Ask them to comment.

2. The author argues forcefully against society's well-known rationalizations for the absence of women in top-paying positions of prestige. Does he persuade you? Why or why not?

3. If, as the author suggests, suburban living serves as a physical and economic barrier to women's pursuit of careers, how can this life-style be changed?

4. Why do you agree or disagree with the statement: "women are being required to pay at their individual expense all

kinds of social costs, particularly the cost of child rearing,...the individual mother not only is not paid for her contribution, but is penalized in her life outside the home" (page 58)?

5. Should women be urged into "careers" rather than "jobs"? What effects, beneficial or negative, would this strategy have on women, the family, society?

6. In Chapter 6 the author uses the church as a case study of institutionalized sexism, and in examining its history the church seems to stand guilty. Does anyone want to argue with the author about ordination of women, the church as a "male bastion," etc.?

7. How was Jesus' treatment of women "different"? What's the point of his preference for Mary over Martha?

8. The order of creation argument is used to defend woman's primary role as wife and mother. Can we be certain that man-made institutions are ordained by God? that in the created order God ordained women to be subject to men? Do you agree with the author when he suggests on page 67 that perhaps the order of creation argument is not very helpful--in fact, it has a "long and disreputable history"? Why?

9. What does the author think the church's attitude should be on legalized abortion? What do you think?

FREEDOM FOR WOMEN (Chapters 7 & 8)

Identify and evaluate the main themes, focusing on freedom for women to define themselves and to seek their own goals.

Questions for discussion and further thought:

1. Do you agree that "an attack on the nuclear family is in itself not necessarily an attack on stable relations and a long-term commitment between a woman and a man...nor...a devaluation of children" (page 75)? Should feminists suggest alternative life-styles? Could you envision ways of extending our single-family life-styles to include other social and economic relationships?

2. The author says identifying a woman primarily as wife and mother is of a piece with the stereotypes of women as sex objects or Playboy Bunnies. Do you agree? Do women themselves sometimes bolster this conception of their identity? Cite examples.

3. "Decisions in abortion involve weighing conflicting rights of the mother and of the fetus. We are not talking here about easy choices between good and evil, but about choosing the least evil alternative. But who is to do the choosing" (page 82)? Comment on this statement by the author.

4. What about the morality (as opposed to legality) of abortion? Do you agree that good arguments can be offered on all sides? If so, does the author's appeal for civility in argument seem sensible? What is meant by this question: "is diehard opposition to abortion worthwhile if people in the church must betray its ideals by use of coercion, distortion, and scare tactics? Is diehard advocacy worthwhile if it alienates potential support and fixes on abortion as the 19th century fastened itself to suffrage" (page 84)?

5. Have you found yourself saying--in reading or discussing this book--"I never thought of that before"? Can this be the beginning of consciousness-raising for you? What long-term benefits will derive from these new insights? How can they be translated into "collective political action"? Are collective political solutions necessary? Why?

6. In what ways can Christian men and women contribute to the cause of freedom for women? The author suggests legislation for day-care centers, equitable tax laws. Can you suggest others?

7. How do the women in the jroup identify themselves? Does it make a difference if one refers to herself as "John's wife," "Connie's mother," or Mary Jones? Some women's libbers are retaining their maiden names and adding a hyphen and their husband's sirname when they marry: for example, Polly Allen-Robinson. What are the implications of this practice?

8. Do you agree with the author's final statement that the essential goals of women's liberation are "both generous and humane"?

9. Please use the excellent bibliography for suggestions for further reading on this subject. Anyone for a consciousness-raising group?

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WHO'S TALKING? WHO'S LISTENING?

1

An age as contorted and troubled as ours develops a whole vocabulary of slogans and abbreviations to label its aspirations, discontents and preoccupations. Usually the words are quite familiar, but put in certain ways they become loaded with particular meanings. War on Poverty, We Shall Overcome, Black Power, Urban Renewal, Silent Majority, Peace Now—all became part of common speech during the 1960s. Toward the end of that decade, two more were added. One was Ecology, the other, Women's Liberation.

Barriers to Understanding

Both of these have already gained attention in the news media. Ecology has generally been treated with sympathy and respect. But women's liberation has not fared so well. Television cameramen are delighted to zero in

on a bizarrely dressed woman shouting into a microphone. Throwing bras and girdles into a trash basket at a Miss America contest is made to order for sniggering humor by commentators trying to enlived the 10 P.M. news. In some cases newspapers and magazines have deliberately refused to print news about women's liberation activities, especially when the press itself has been the object of attack. Instead editors have welcomed articles that feature the militant rhetoric and sexual preoccupations of some feminists to demonstrate what kooks and deviants "they really are."

Is the news media's version of women's liberation the real movement or is it something else? Is the media's version perhaps the equivalent of all the stories about women drivers and dumb blondes and mothers-in-law and farmers' daughters—another way of making women into a joke? The only way to tell is to take a closer look at women's liberation yourself. But doing that only makes things more complicated. The term women's liberation originated in the New Left, but the news media have made it synonymous with feminism (and it is in that, popular, usage that it is employed here). There is no national organization called Women's Liberation. Instead there is a general feminist movement within which is a wide spectrum of groups representing a great diversity of views about the role of women, styles of life, and means toward their goals.

At one end of the spectrum are groups such as WEAL (Women's Equity Action League) and NOW (National Organization for Women), that tend to attract more mature women, often those in the professions, who concentrate mainly on legal and political attempts to change the status of women. At the other end of the spectrum may be something like WITCH (Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell) which in the 60s drew mostly from young, radical women and was flamboyant and at times hilarious in its forays against stereotypes and the institutions supporting them. In between these poles is a vast number of other groups. Some are found in professional organizations. Associations of everything from architects to zoologists are likely to have at least a women's caucus. Others are local, more or less informal

groups working with widely different degrees of effectiveness to arouse women to an awareness of discrimination against them and to an attack on that discrimination.

Thus an impeccably dressed, gray-haired woman in her 50s quietly pressuring a government official to end discrimination against women is just as much a part of the movement as the woman in her 20s, with flowing hair and dressed in baggy sweater and jeans who is haranguing a crowd with a bullhorn. And vice versa. Such a range of organizations and constituencies makes it difficult to talk about contemporary feminism; the movement is so varied that one can find exceptions to almost any generalization. Everyone must be careful not to attribute statements or actions by one person or group to the whole.

But there are other reasons why it is difficult to talk about feminism, reasons that lie with the audience rather than in the speaker or subject. In the first place, most people are likely not to take a woman speaker or writer seriously. Or at least they have more confidence in a male spokesman. Psychological experiments bear this out. In one test, for example, college coeds were found to give a significantly higher rating to an article when the author was John T. McKay than to the identical article when the name was changed to Joan T. McKay. Even when the John T. McKays were writing in fields traditionally considered feminine (such as elementary education or dietetics), the girls attributed more authority to them than to the Joan T. McKays.[1] Here then is one problem in communication. Most people are simply not accustomed to granting women much credibility.

Another problem is that some women who are wives and mothers, or intend to be, define themselves in those roles so rigidly that they become extremely threatened by attempts to define women in a different way: would not this mean that they would no longer be fully women? They react with intense hostility toward feminists. As one woman put it in a letter to an editor, "I believe when women start shouting about liberation what they really want and need is a strong man to put them in their 'place.' I don't believe women are equal to men and we

weren't meant to be." [2] In other words, women attribute to the feminists what they fear the feminists are saying of them; they attack feminists for not being truly women. Another basis for a negative response by women is fear of having suspicions confirmed. "A lot of women," observes one editor, "react icily to Women's Lib because they don't want to hear, now that they think it's too late, about alternatives they might have chosen." [3]

Some men react with nearly equivalent negativism because they sense vaguely or sometimes recognize quite clearly that feminist ideas endanger the male world. Comedians tell countless jokes about husbands who couldn't control their wives; a man's man is evidently someone who takes a directive, protective role toward women. What does it say about a man if he cannot protect women, much less direct them? Furthermore, capable women seeking jobs means greater economic competition. And many husbands would find it disquieting if their wives were to outrank them in occupational status or would be conspicuously more successful in prestige or income. Changing the roles of women might also mean that husbands and fathers would have to take on unaccustomed, inconvenient, and probably disagreeable tasks at home and in society at large. It is far easier to pontificate about women's natural character and accept the services of a devoted mother and wife.

There is also the nagging suspicion on the part of some husbands that if women's liberation really took hold, their wives might no longer be the girls they wed, and who knows what might happen to their marriages? To put it bluntly, many men have good reason to be interested in the status quo. It is a reasonably comfortable one with a great many advantages. And fundamental change is a very frightening thing to most people. Sometimes children, by the way, respond in much the same way as some husbands. Pressure to conform is strong and a mother who begins to violate social expectations may be something of an embarrassment, at least at first.

Both men and women are often shocked when they hear some feminists talk about the need for changing existing patterns of marriage and child care. Convinced that our forms of marriage and the family are immutable,

such people become so frightened they refuse to listen further. They are unable to suspend their own convictions long enough to find out why some feminists are unhappy with marriage and the family as they know them, and what alternatives are being proposed. Finally, many women find themselves reasonably happy where they are. Their response to the feminists is not so much anger as apathy. They feel no need to change their position and status in society.

Facing Up to the Problem

Thus all kinds of barriers stand in the way of grasping what is going on: the presentation to the public by the news media, a complicated situation within the feminist movement, and built-in resistance to feminist ideas. But regardless of the difficulties, women's liberation must be faced. It must be for a number of reasons. First, independently of feminism, over the past few decades several aspects of women's lives have changed drastically. It is very hard to imagine a future in which these changes —in the sexual freedom of women, the birth rate, and paid employment—have no impact whatsoever. By the 1960s it would have been unthinkable for a marriage manual to fail to stress that both partners should enjoy themselves in sex, that the husband has as much responsibility to please his wife sexually as the wife has toward her husband. This assumption is a departure from earlier views that sex was something men were interested in and women submitted to. Scientific backing for the assumption came during the 1960s in the controversial work by Masters and Johnson which indicated that women have a much higher potential for sexual pleasure than had been thought, probably higher than male capacity.

At the same time, of course, contraceptives of various sorts have become more generally available. Much more is involved here than simply that women (of whatever marital status) may enjoy sex without fearing pregnancy —though that is certainly part of the story. Contraceptives made it possible for women to be in control of the matter rather than having to depend on male coopera-

tion. Furthermore when in the last decade popular attitudes changed from favoring the large families of the postwar baby boom to more stringent population control, mechanisms were at hand to lower the birth rate. The result is continuance of a drastic shift in the life pattern of many women. My great-grandmother, for instance, was married in 1873 at age 22. She had her first child when she was 25 years old. She went on to have ten more children, the last when she was age 45. Quite likely she suffered a number of miscarriages in addition. For a period of 23 years, then, she was pregnant about two-fifths of the time. And she was 63 years old before her last child reached age 18. To her, children were obviously an immediate concern for nearly all of her most active years.

A young white, middle-class woman today, however, can expect that all her children will be in school by her early 30s and in college (and out of the home) by her early 40s. At the same time her life expectancy has increased into the middle 70s. In other words, a woman has about half of her life ahead of her at the point when her last child enters school. But popular attitudes—of women as well as men—continue to reflect life styles of the 19th century. To act as if child-care is the central concern of a woman's entire life is a sentimental holdover unsupported by present-day reality. Not only is it not true, but population concerns would indicate that this pattern should change if it were true.

In addition to shifts in sexual attitudes and in life patterns, more women are working today than ever before —nearly half of all women between 18 and 64. Studies have shown that wives who work are more likely to express themselves at home and to share influence and authority more evenly with their husbands. And daughters of working mothers tend to be more self-reliant, independent and aggressive.[4] Thus there have been important changes and they may be self-perpetuating.

All this is not to say that a feminist response is inevitable. But it may indicate that the situation is fluid and women more susceptible than at first appears. The constituency is a very large one in our population—women are after all a majority—and that is another rea-

son feminism must be taken seriously. Furthermore feminists are too aroused and too well motivated to give up any time soon. A large constituency and a determined leadership give the movement enormous potential. If feminists are wrong, then, they should be resolutely opposed, for what they are about is at least mischievous and may well be dangerous. If the feminists are correct, however, then a great injustice is being done and our society is the poorer for it. If they are right, inexcusable physical, psychological, and economic damage is being done to millions of women. And you—or your wife, daughter, sister, and mother—are among the victims.

GROWING UP FEMALE

2

No woman, say the feminists today, escapes the penalties, the pressures, that society brings to bear on female humans nearly from the time they are born until the time they die. These pressures are both symptoms and cause of a status feminists are intent on changing. The usual term for the pressures is socialization. To understand what this means, let's take a case study of a woman we might name Nancy.

Nancy was her parent's first child. Her father then was beginning what became a successful accounting firm. Her mother was, by her own description, "just a housewife." When Nancy's father told his friends the baby had arrived, they congratulated him and then asked whether it was a boy or a girl. When he said, "a girl," they usually laughed and told him not to be disappointed; the *next* one would be a boy. His wife told him the same thing. They were right, too, for Nancy was only a year old when

she had a baby brother, David. Their father complained contentedly of the expense of buying blue baby things instead of wearing out Nancy's pink paraphernalia.

The two children were so close in age they were good playmates. However, as they grew older, the toys they were given became more and more different. At Christmas and birthdays, David received cap pistols and erector sets and finally an electric train. Nancy was not overlooked by any means: play kitchen utensils, dolls, and finally a large doll house. She was not unhappy about getting a doll instead of an erector set, because she quickly learned that there are boys' toys and girls' toys. She noticed how one boy in her second-grade class was teased when he unguardedly admitted he liked dolls. And when she once began to play with her brother's train set, he and his friends told her self-righteously it was not for girls.

Nancy's grandparents visited frequently, something Nancy liked very much, for her grandfather always told them stories and teased the two children. "What are you going to be when you grow up?" he would ask David, and they would all laugh as Dave went from fireman to race car driver to doctor. Then would come the question for Nancy: "Whom are you going to marry when you grow up?" And they would all laugh when her grandfather teased her about the little boy next door.

Nancy and her brother liked to imitate their parents by "helping" in household tasks. At first they were more bother than help, but in time Nancy's mother would call her for assistance in the kitchen and in cleaning while David went to help his father when some carpentry or repairs had to be done. As each got better at these tasks, it made more sense to expect them to help.

In school Nancy was a bright child who loved to read. Almost all her books showed female characters, but not nearly as many as male figures, and somehow even mother bears wore aprons and kept house. Nancy's school books gave her many ideas for games she organized with neighbor children. One of the boys would play the man who was a doctor or a businessman or a banker while Nancy was a nurse or a secretary or a teller or stayed home to cook and sew and clean.

Much of the time, however, Nancy ran around in the neighborhood, climbing trees, wading in ditches and, if the boys would let her, playing football or double-touch tag with them. Several times she overheard her mother and grandmother discussing her exploits, worrying that she was becoming a tomboy. And gradually she learned a lady could never be a tomboy. Since she wanted very much to be grown-up—they had all the privileges, like staying up late—she tried to be a little more restrained and to act like a lady. Acting like a lady, she discerned, meant she couldn't use physical force or be too strong, but should rely on various psychological ploys to get what and where she wanted.

Being a lady came a bit easier in junior high and in high school. Nancy's mother did not encourage early dating particularly, but her girl friends spent a great deal of time talking about boys. They knew it was important for a girl to attract boys, because that was how you could tell a successful girl. That's what television shows and movies and popular songs and the magazines all said. Even their parents and ministers told the girls essentially the same thing when they warned that a promiscuous girl would suffer: she would lose her popularity with boys. If Nancy and her friends missed the point after all of this, they could still pick it up from the mental images that went with the terms for unmarried adults. Single men they knew as bachelors, and most bachelors were "eligible." Single women they heard called old maids and no one spoke of an "eligible" old maid.

Nancy and her girl friends also knew that physical appearance was important to attract boys. After all the magazines, even the billboards, they saw used women to sell things. What was significant about these women was almost always one thing—their looks. Nancy and her friends took this for granted because they had grown up seeing these images and they used these standards to judge themselves and other girls. They understood that boys did too, for the boys had also grown up seeing women this way.

Nearly everyone Nancy knew seemed to think girls did not have much aptitude for certain ways of thinking.

She heard a lot of joking references to girls and mathematics, for instance. Nancy did not do badly in the math courses she took, but none of her girl friends were taking more math, so she stopped too. She did not take any physics in high school either. She heard the physics course spent a lot of time with mechanical things and she knew boys were a lot better at that than girls; her brother and father were always tinkering with things while she helped her mother in the kitchen. Besides she was not taking the math courses that would help in physics. Of course that meant when she was with a group of friends and the boys began arguing about something mechanical such as a car, she did not have much idea of what they were talking about. But she could tell them right out she was dumb; boys knew as well as the girls that girls are not very good at machinery. Anyway, she learned it made boys feel good to explain to her.

In her junior and senior years, her high school counselors began having conferences with each student, suggesting what they could do after graduation. Nancy's grades were good and everyone took for granted she would go to college. All her close friends were going. Besides, as one counselor said, she would need college to get some kind of job "just in case." She knew what that meant, of course; just in case she did not get married or was widowed early.

Nancy was not very sure what she wanted to do after college "just in case" so she and her counselor talked over a number of possibilities. Her test scores were high and she liked books, so the counselor suggested she think about being a teacher (perhaps high school English) or a librarian. But Nancy was undecided. Her best friend wanted to work with people and was talking about nursing or social work. The boys Nancy dated, who got about the same grades she did, spoke of being lawyers and doctors and architects. Nancy was impressed and was pleased and rather proud of herself to be dating boys like that. She knew her mother was too. No one suggested Nancy think of being a lawyer and the idea never came to her otherwise. She didn't even know any women lawyers; neither did her father. There was one

woman doctor in town, but she was a specialist whom few girls ever visited. All the other physicians were men, just as in the doctor programs on television.

Nancy still had not made up her mind when she went off to college. A year later her brother was in college too. Both of them were slow in choosing majors. This worried their father. He was hoping his son would take over the business, but Dave was hesitant. It never occurred to their father to ask Nancy if she wanted to take over the firm. And that idea never occurred to Nancy either. During Dave's sophomore year, he had long talks with their father, trying to decide on a career. Nancy was a junior by this time, but as she overheard her father tell David, "Now, your sister, that's different, because she's a woman and is going to get married and settle down with children. But how are you going to amount to anything unless you have a good job?"

In her senior year Nancy and Michael, a boy she had been dating, became serious about each other and soon announced their engagement. Nancy by then had an English major and one of her professors had been talking to her about graduate school, but once she was engaged she decided she had better be practical and get the necessary courses to teach high school so she would be able to have an income as soon as she graduated. Her fiance was an engineer who was going to go on to business school and they both expected Nancy to support them until he finished his education.

And that is about how things turned out. They were married just after graduation, and that September Michael began graduate school while Nancy found a teaching job in a nearby high school. She found she was much better at teaching than she expected. The principal of her school was exceptionally cooperative and she was able to try out some of her own rather unorthodox and innovative ideas. They worked so well she thought of carrying them further. But when Michael finished school the best job he was offered was on the West Coast, so as a matter of course they moved there, although Nancy could not find a job at all comparable to the one she left.

Nancy did not mind too much because they planned

to start a family anyway. In a few years she and Michael had two boys and a girl. The family kept Nancy busy all day long and part of the night besides. She subscribed to women's magazines or bought them at the supermarket and they always had ideas for changes around the house that Nancy felt she should try, though they took a great deal of time since they kept raising her standards. Michael was quite successful in his job and they were able to live in a very pleasant suburb with open land for the children to play in. Nancy thought occasionally about returning to teaching or even of going back to school at a nearby university, but gave up the idea after she saw a friend try it. Finding a full-time babysitter was nearly impossible in their suburb, and the friend's husband often grumbled that the house and meals were not the same as when she was home all day, so she had to get up early to do all the housework before she left: that made her and the children irritable for lack of sleep. Then one of the neighbors hinted that they must be in a real financial squeeze for her to endure such problems. That made her husband even unhappier and Nancy's friend finally quit. Nancy decided the lesson was clear, at least until the children were older.

By her early 30s Nancy joked at her birthdays about not revealing her age. But she realized with some contentment that she had already achieved most of her dreams. As she ferried the children and their dog around to shopping and dentist appointments and cub scout meetings and music lessons, they made an appealing picture. In fact Michael, who left the office early one day and saw them arrive home, told Nancy they looked like an automobile ad in a woman's magazine: a pretty, well-dressed mother with three attractive children and a bouncing dog in a late model stationwagon in a comfortable suburb. Michael was very proud of them and happy with himself that he had been successful enough to give his family a good life, even though it meant he was not at home as much as he should have been. And Nancy was rather pleased too. All this and a loving husband. As she reminded herself when she occasionally got restless, what more could a woman want?

Success at What Price?

What had happened to Nancy? It must be said—though some radical feminists would contest this—that a great many pleasant things had happened to her. She had grown up in a closely-knit, loving family, something she valued so highly she wanted to replicate it as an adult. She had found someone whom she could trust as an intimate companion, and who reciprocated that trust. She was able to accept and enjoy sex as a great gift. And she knew the fascinating and sometimes awesome experience of parenthood.

But that was not all that had happened to Nancy. Already as a child she had learned that girls are judged by a different standard than boys and had begun measuring her conduct by that standard. This included the recognition that girls do not do well measured on the boys' criteria. Nancy's formal education, it is true, had been much like her brother's but there was one key difference. As Bruno Bettelheim puts it, "Boys have no doubt that their school is intended, at least, to help make them a *success* in their mature life. . . . But the girl is made to feel that she must undergo precisely the same training only because she may need it if she is a *failure*." [1] Nancy had accepted the standards of success and failure presented to her. What others were available to her? Her sensitivity about her age was part of all this, for it reflected her recognition that in our society, unlike male assets such as ambition and power which are not tied to youth, the major female asset is her looks, her desirability, something that depreciates with age. (Small wonder female movie stars and Miss America contestants are usually anti-feminist; their careers are built on exploiting their sex.) As it turned out, Nancy was a "success." That success had a very high cost Nancy was virtually unaware, for she had grown up with the assumption that women define their lives in terms of others' lives, especially those of husband and children.

Another way of putting this is that much of Nancy's life was as it was because society defined her as a human female, though it defined her father and her brother and her husband as male humans. In other words, society had

defined her first of all as a female, while it defined the men first of all as human. Her sex was the prime condition in her role. Their humanness was the prime condition in their roles. At this point socialization became objectification. Nancy was treated as an object, not as a full human being.

These are harsh words, and it is at this point many women who have so internalized a set of values as wives and mothers that they can see no others become so hostile they stop listening and rational discourse breaks into monologs. But in all save the most radical rhetoric, the focus of feminist attack here is not being a mother. Rather it is the "programming" society engages in as soon as the sex of the child is known. If the child is a boy, that programming is a comparatively open-ended shaping to foster choices of life patterns out of a large variety of human activity. If the child is a girl, the programming is a rigorous delimitation to female activities: sexual partner, wife, mother. As a final blow, this programming has more than its share of ironic contradictions. For example girls, who all their lives are taught that the normal goal is to marry, are forbidden to initiate proceedings to gain that end. Girls do not ordinarily ask for dates and propose; boys do.

Nancy's parents would have been quick to see the process of making objects of women in the pages of something like *Playboy* magazine; women there, they would see, are automatically identified primarily as sexual beings. But her parents failed to recognize other manifestations of the same process when it appeared elsewhere, even in their own home, when women are automatically identified primarily as wives and mothers. Failing even to perceive what they were doing, Nancy's parents and friends and teachers and husband—in sum her whole world—identified her primarily by her sex. It is hardly surprising she responded by identifying herself primarily in the same way. It is not that being a wife and mother was necessarily wrong, but that she was given so few openings to choose anything else.

But was she really given few opportunities to choose something else? After all, no one told her explicitly she could *not* be an attorney or an airline pilot, or an engi-

neer. To put it that way is to reject the whole case study. Unlike many fathers, who according to surveys are quite antagonistic to the idea of careers for their daughters, Nancy's father had been, he thought, "neutral." He had not understood that in this context neutrality is advocacy of the status quo. Children pick up a host of non-explicit cues in the course of growing up that shape their expectations of themselves and of others. (This is the basis for the frequently-seen advice that parents not preach at their children, but be good examples to follow.)

White Americans have begun to realize this in the area of race relations. When children see television shows in which black actors appear only as domestic servants or comics; when they read school textbooks in which black people are hardly ever mentioned; when they see advertisements that picture only pretty white girls; when they hear jokes that refer to blacks by uncomplimentary names and depend for humor on negative social stereotypes—when children experience all this, no one has to tell them outright that in America black people are set apart from whites and are not worth as much. White children pick this up unconsciously. And sadly enough so do black children, who may come to value themselves less because of these experiences.

Much the same process holds true for boys and girls. They grow up watching women on television whose main problems are how to get their wash whiter and floors shinier and to make themselves more beautiful and to smell better and to attract or retain a husband. Children read textbooks that hardly ever mention women, and when they do, emphasize women in a domestic capacity; after all Betsy Ross is famous for her sewing. Children see ads that use women for specific physical traits, and hear endless jokes about the ineptitude and failings of women. Boys pick up the lessons unconsciously and it shapes their attitudes toward girls.

Former senator Charles Goodell tells the stoy of the congressman visiting a third-grade classroom who was asked by a girl if he thought some day there could be a woman president. He replied affirmatively, pointing out there are more women than men and if they got to-

gether they could elect a woman president. And then came a little male voice from the back of the room: "Now what did you have to go and tell them that for?" [2]

On a school playground during recess a teacher watched a group of third-grade boys milling about in concentration on an active game with a kickball. One of their group ran across the field with the pack, but clear of it, shouting over and over in a shrill, worried, little voice, "but that's a girls' game; that's a girls' game." He was the voice of future attitudes for the group.

Sadly enough girls also learn these lessons, and at an early age. For example, one mother who was admitted to medical school found her four year old daughter heartbroken by the news, for she thought it meant her mother would have to turn into a man and not be a mother anymore.[3] The result of these lessons is a human being who from an early age is likely to be self-deprecating and fearful that in areas other than the home and family her aptitudes and chances of success are small. When asked if they "could be" governor of the state or a judge, California junior high school girls were much less likely than boys to answer yes (17 percent of the girls vs. 44 percent of the boys on the governor; 26 percent vs. 49 percent regarding the judge).[4]

The situation only worsens by college age. In one experiment, a group of college students was given a sentence and asked to complete a story from it, a common test to reveal aspirations and attitudes. The boys were asked to complete a story that began, "After first-term finals, John finds himself at the top of his medical class." The girls were given the same beginning except that the name was changed to Anne. Some remarkable differences between boys and girls were revealed. Only ten percent of the boys, but two-thirds of the girls displayed either anxiety or even rejection of the cues provided in the sentence they were given. Consider these more or less representative endings by the girls:

> *Anne doesn't want to be number one in her class. . . . She feels she shouldn't rank so high because of social reasons. She drops down to ninth in the class and then marries the boy who graduates number one.*
>
> *Anne feels guilty. . . . She will finally have a ner-*

vous breakdown and quit medical school and marry a successful young doctor.

Anne is a code name for a nonexistent person created by a group of med. students. They take turns writing exams for Anne.[5]

Someone who even in fantasy would need such escape hatches from success, say the feminists, has been psychologically crippled. Of course, this is only one experiment with a limited group of people. But anyone can do a bit of informal testing by using a riddle suggested by some writers. Without steering the conversation in a feminist direction, pose to a group of teenagers the following problem: A boy and his father were involved in an auto accident and both were seriously injured. They were taken to different hospitals for treatment. On approaching the boy's stretcher, the surgeon exclaimed, "I can't operate on him; he's my son." How could this be? Usually the answers will range from complicated stepfather relationships to artificial insemination before someone may suggest that the surgeon was the boy's mother.

Behind the difficulty of this riddle is a whole system of expectations, and it is interesting to see the line of reasoning when elements of that system are endangered. A Maryland school board recently considered a proposal for coeducational tennis, and opponents produced the argument that "a high school boy, beaten at a game of tennis by a girl his own age, would feel castrated." The adolescent boy, said the opponents, learns to accept defeat from a male peer. "But if he should take a real walloping from a girl his age, why then, we very often see a true withdrawal from sports altogether. . . ."[6] Such opinions—and they are only that—ought to elicit some pointed questions. Why should a boy feel so defeated unless he has been taught all his life that girls are inferior? And who taught him that? Apparently not experience, if girls can actually beat him in a game. And why all this concern (expressed incidentally by those who do not blink at competitive, hardening sports) for the poor boy's tender psyche with not a word about the girl's feelings? Is a girl's ego so strong she can stand without damage not only defeat by a boy, but even the exclusion

from competition? There is a double standard at work here, a concentration on the damage to the boy of defeat rather than on the benefits to the girl of victory. Whether defeat in tennis—or swimming or Little League baseball —would actually damage a boy is open to question. What is striking is the blatant way in which in this aspect of social conditioning male mental health gains unquestioned priority over female mental health.

Generally, when feminists speak about social conditioning, the convinced anti-feminist and the doubter feel certain they hold the trump card, and sooner or later they haul it out. Usually it goes something like this:

> What the feminists cannot admit to themselves is that women really *are* different. Women have babies and men do not. Men have certain physical and psychological (masculine) traits and women have different physical and psychological (feminine) traits. And that is what makes the world go 'round. Vive la différence!

But that line of approach is not the crushing rejoinder the anti-feminist imagines. Of course it would be ludicrous to deny that women have different reproductive equipment than men. And anyone can observe in our society that there is a series of traits we conventionally label masculine, and another series we label feminine. But are these traits innately sex-linked? Does a woman (who can bear children) differ in intellectual characteristics, aptitudes and needs from a man (who cannot)? Is anatomy destiny?

Anti-feminists are convinced it is. Blithely disregarding the enormous difficulties of separating nature and nurture (even in carefully constructed experiments), they act—and insist society act—as if they possess conclusive proof. They refuse to entertain even the possibility that we have constructed a self-fulfilling prophecy about women.

What, however, if ingenious experiments and exhaustive observation conclude there are indeed innate differences between male and female because of hormonal or nervous system differences? A carefully constructed feminist position is hardly demolished. The essence of

the feminist stress on socialization is not that women are just like men. It is that society effectively closes innumerable options to women without consulting their preferences. As one psychologist (who leans toward innate differences) points out, our society, like most in recorded history, socializes children to maximize whatever original differences between the sexes exist.[7] Furthermore, even with the powerful socialization that both sexes undergo today, the range within one sex is nearly as striking as the differences between them. But those who do not fit the norms are not allowed to depart from the female status without penalty. Society has developed a whole pattern of limits for women.

Wanting time to turn these responses over mentally, the doubter often interrupts with a question: If things are all so bad for women, then why didn't they object a long time ago? Why is everyone suddenly excited now? That is essentially a historical question and not easy to answer. But it is a good one to wrestle with and we turn to it in the next chapter.

NEW ATTACKS ON OLD PROBLEMS

3

The emergence of women's liberation in the mid-sixties generally caught Americans by surprise. Women got the vote in 1920 and after that militant and organized feminism pretty well disappeared from public view. By the 1960s there were few people who remembered very vividly what it was like to have a major feminist argument dividing American society. In other words, few people were equipped by earlier experience with the matter to form judgments about the resurgence of feminism.

A 19th Century Pedestal

Because of this it is a good idea to go back for a brief look at earlier feminist campaigns. Unfortunately most people don't know very much about past feminism, either because they have forgotten what they once learned or, more likely, because they never heard much

about it during their high school or college years. (That in itself may say a great deal about the status of women and we shall return to it later.) Whether forgotten or never learned, however, the fact is that the first concerted, articulated discontent with women's position in the United States began in the 1830s. Precisely why feminism emerged then—rather than, say, in the 1730s or the 1870s—is not at all clear. There is no commonly agreed-on answer for this question, as crucial as it is. One of the most stimulating suggestions for an answer draws from research on the history of the family. This work indicates that the closely-knit family, clearly marked off from society and thrown in on itself—the family most in the western world today take for granted—is not a constant in human history, but instead emerged in the 17th and 18th centuries. Somewhere during that time people began to think of children and the family as the separated entity we presume and prize today. If this really is the case, the load on the wife and mother was greatly increased just as her sphere was narrowed to the home. Inevitably, at some point, some women would find this relatively new burden intolerable and would publicly question the whole system. That point came in the early 19th century.[1]

Whether or not this interesting hypothesis is accepted, when feminism did emerge, it was tied to the crusade to free the slaves. This connection with abolitionism was no accident. New England clergymen active in anti-slavery agitation were prepared for the growth of women's auxiliaries devoted to the cause, but they grew alarmed when women became more active than they thought proper. Things came to a head when the Grimké sisters, on an anti-slavery speaking tour, failed to limit their audiences to women. That women should address "promiscuous" assemblies (meaning men and women together) was, according to the clergy, precisely the sort of thing forbidden by St. Paul. The ministers were anxious to have the slaves freed, but not at the expense of the proper male-female relationship specified, they thought, in the Bible and the natural order. "If the vine," they warned, "whose strength and beauty is to lean upon the trellis-work and half conceal its clusters, thinks to assume

the independence and the overshadowing nature of the elm, it will not only cease to bear fruit, but fall in shame and dishonor into the dust." [2]

The targets of this barrage were undeterred by the forecast of sterility and put up a vigorous defense, claiming the Bible would be differently interpreted when women were educated in the ancient languages. More important, once repulsed by such unreliable allies, some women began to realize that much of what they had been saying against slavery applied to their own position in society. In the rhetoric of the 1970s, they were radicalized.

White women were not slaves, of course, but their position was not enviable. Politically, they had no formal way of participating in government. As Jefferson put it, "the tender breasts of ladies were not formed for political convulsions." [3] Legally, the status of the married woman was uncertain at best. Traditional authorities held that the only legal competence she had was through her husband. Matters varied from state to state, but often a married woman did not have clear title to property or to wages for her work; she might not have the legal right to sign a contract or sue in court, nor automatic guardianship of her children in case of her husband's death or incompetence.

Virtually no formal education beyond what we would call the elementary grades was open to women. No college admitted a female student. For one thing, people believed women did not need an education; for another, women were not thought capable of benefiting from it. As one writer chivalrously observed, woman has a head "almost too small for intellect, but just big enough for love." [4] Without an education, women were excluded from the professions. When they did work outside the home for wages, it was usually a sign something was wrong in the household.

Finally, without efficient contraceptives women were at the mercy of the reproductive process in an age of rudimentary gynecological knowledge and barbarous obstetrics. Under such conditions the physiological and psychological toll of repeated and closely spaced births was a high one.

Women who began to attack these limits on their status and roles soon discovered that they were being confined in a highly unusual way. Unlike a racial minority which may be the object of scorn, hatred, and perhaps even slavery, women were put on a pedestal. Society could then claim quite correctly that women were raised above the crowd of mere men; far from being hated, they were instead the object of extravagant admiration. And who does not want to be admired and treasured? What was not so clear—unless you happened to be standing on the pedestal and got restless—is that there is not very much space on top of a pedestal for moving around. And there is no graceful and convenient way to get down. As the clergy insisted, a misstep brings a "fall in shame and dishonor into the dust" at men's feet. Pedestals do not have steps, of course, for they are made for statues and monuments, not people. What had happened was that society was trying to make monuments and statues out of women. Thus the pedestal could be symbol both of admiration and oppression.

Since the much-battered ruins of that pedestal still stand today, it is worth trying to mentally reconstruct the original, just as one may see a reconstruction of an old fort. The pedestal of the 19th century was constructed of four virtues—piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity.[5]

It was widely held that by nature women were more pious than men. Men were concerned with this world; women were naturally inclined to the world hereafter. Of course since women were thought to be not as intellectually endowed as men, they were not expected to be concerned with the finer points of theology. In fact, for them to study theology might be very dangerous, for it would only confuse and befuddle them. Prayer, worship, and acts of charity were their proper sphere in religion.

Women were also believed to be the purer of the two sexes. In fact, they were thought practically free of sexual desires. If and when they went astray it was because they had been misled by a man, the baser of the two sexes. Unfortunately it might not be hard for a man to entice

a woman, since women were thought to be characteristically innocent and anxious to serve and please others.

This was connected with the other supports for the pedestal. Women, people were convinced, were naturally passive, submissive and obedient; true womanhood "is ever timid, doubtful, and clingingly dependent; a perpetual childhood." [6] A woman was also inclined by her sex, it was said, to be happiest in the home. There she naturally submerged her individuality in caring for her husband and raising her children. The nurturant role was the one her sex equipped her for and urged her toward.

Piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity then were the building blocks for the pedestal on which women were placed in the 19th century. These are more than just part of our history. They may still be found in American attitudes, though often chipped and cracked and rounded at the edges.

Women are supposed to be more interested than men in the church;
women are somehow purer and more innocent than men in sex;
the true woman will be obedient to father and husband;
to women belong most major responsibilities for the home and children.

These are propositions behind statements you may still hear anywhere in the country today. Few people now would consciously defend them quite the way they were defended in the 19th century, but these attitudes lie just beneath the surface. Though not necessarily articulated explicitly, they are widespread, commonly held and rarely examined.

The Fight for Suffrage

Nineteenth century women who rejected the pedestal position began to insist that what was morally right for men was morally right for women. They began to insist that women are the equal of men and should have equal access to the rights and privileges held by men. This position was expressed by a small group of women who is-

sued the first declaration of grievances while meeting at Seneca Falls, N.Y. in 1848. The women took the rhetoric of the American Revolution seriously and literally. When the Declaration of Independence said all men are created equal, it means, said the women, female as well as male. To make the point the Seneca Falls meeting cast its proclamation in the words of the declaration of 1776, substituting "man" for King George III when it came to specific indictments. The women cast a wide net in stating their grievances. They were concerned about the vote, but they were also interested in legal status, marital rights, economics and employment, the sexual double standard, and what today is called socialization.[7]

The women at Seneca Falls and subsequent conventions were a small minority, usually ridiculed by the press and other public spokesmen. During the Civil War, however, their hopes rose in the expectation that at last women as well as blacks would gain proper recognition by constitutional amendment. However these hopes were crushed when male allies deserted them, judging that only one reform was possible and that the ex-slaves needed help more than women.

During the long years from 1870 to 1920 (when the 19th amendment for women's suffrage was finally passed), feminists largely concentrated their efforts on the vote. This was a drastic foreshortening of the concerns expressed in 1848, but there were reasons for it. The vote was a good issue because it was easy to explain and highly visible. It was a glancing blow, not a frontal attack, on Victorian sensitivities about sex and family roles. It appealed to those interested in social reform, since nearly everyone assumed that women, being purer, would vote for reform. But in the process it was easy to forget that the original program had included much more than suffrage. This was especially true as the suffrage campaign dragged on interminably.

There is no doubt suffrage was expensive. It took more than fifty years of effort.[8] The first generation of leaders —women such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Lucy Stone—died without seeing success, and a second generation came to maturity long before the goal was assured. There were in these years nearly

500 separate campaigns just to get legislatures to put suffrage amendments to the voters.

Most of the campaigning was quite ladylike, at least by 20th century standards, but not all was peaceful. Shortly before World War I feminists in England, conducting a similar struggle for suffrage, turned to violence. Parties of well-dressed ladies strolled down fashionable streets breaking shop windows with hammers or stones hidden in the commodious purses of the time. They harangued concert audiences from balcony seats—after first handcuffing themselves to railings to prevent prompt removal by police. A few dabbled in arson. And even the more timid could fill the corner mailbox with jam.

American feminists staged massive parades and meetings that included nationally prominent women. The most militant, encouraged by English examples, picketed the White House, an act that not only flouted accepted standards of behavior, but also smacked of disloyalty in wartime. When arrested, illegally, the pickets went on hunger strikes and were force-fed (in days before intravenous techniques), guaranteeing the creation of controversial martyrs. Many more women worked skillfully in intense, coordinated lobbying campaigns. And then suddenly in 1920 it was all over with the ratification of the 19th amendment. Women had the vote.

Masses of the constituency and many leaders relaxed, either forgetting that originally this was only one of many reforms or assuming that suffrage would automatically lead to most of the rest. This was not hard to do, for the decade following ratification in 1920 was one of spectacular changes in dress, sexual mores, public behavior and employment of women. Skirts were shorter than ever before, automobiles and contraceptives changed dating and marriage behavior, women smoked and drank in public, and flocked to city offices to work as secretaries, receptionists, and telephone operators.

We know from a half-century vantage point, however, that the changes of the 20s were far more superficial than they once seemed. A woman might wear less confining clothes—and still find society identified her as a woman and hence not as logical or creative as men. A woman might be much freer as far as sex was concerned—and

still find society insisted her place after marriage was in the home, that in marriage her interests were to be subordinated to her husband's. A woman might be more likely to go to college—and still find she was encouraged toward specific, "feminine" majors. A woman might find it much easier to gain employment—and still discover she was expected to be a secretary rather than executive, teacher rather than principal, teller rather than bank officer.

Resurgence of the Movement

In other words, there was much left to be done. But feminism nevertheless dwindled and disappeared. Fifty years passed before it again surfaced, and its reappearance is as difficult to explain as its origins in the 19th century. Whatever the reason, a stirring was apparent by the mid-sixties. Betty Friedan's book, *The Feminine Mystique,* which appeared in 1964, was not only an opening gun but a whole salvo in its own right. That same year Alice Rossi began in less well-known articles to provide a thoughtful rationale for change in women's status.[9] Women like these—mature, often with graduate degrees and in the professions—formed one wing of the rapidly gathering forces.

The other wing grew out of the radical student movement of the 1960s. Young women involved here were sharply rebuffed by their male counterparts when they became self-conscious of themselves as women, when some began to say that women were an oppressed minority. Stokely Carmichael's flippant, "The proper position for women in SNCC is prone," understandably infuriated women who had dedicated themselves to radical causes. Some began to notice that even in radical organizations, women were usually shunted into clerical and assistant roles rather than encouraged to take leadership positions. Apparently men in the New Left were no more free of ingrained ideas on women's status and role than their fathers.

Significant legal support for the emerging movement also came in 1964 via the Civil Rights Act of that year. This was of course concerned with racial discrimination; Title VII of the bill prohibited such barriers in employ-

ment. Attempting to discredit the measure, a Southern representative amended it to include prohibiting discrimination in employment on the basis of sex. Enough took the proposal seriously, however, to keep it alive and in the bill and there it remained through final passage. Amid the concentration on the civil rights of blacks, those of women attracted relatively little serious notice; there was a tendency to make a joke of the women. But the law was on the books, available to women when they were prepared to move more actively. Such readiness was apparent by the late 1960s when both wings of the movement grew with astonishing speed. The spontaneity and the energy of the response across the country indicated something more than a temporary fashionable interest. After a half-century lapse, feminism was once again abroad in the land.

From a Historical Perspective

The history of feminism in this country is full of fascinating personalities and questions that are important for the history of the country as a whole. But what conclusions for the present can one draw from all of this?

First, what we see today has been around for a long time. It is not something startlingly new that may be blamed on a growing moral laxity, parental permissiveness, the miniskirt or some other convenient scapegoat in the 20th century.

To put it more positively, American society has been through eras of militant feminism before. Much of what we see today is new to us only because we do not know our own past. For example, some radical feminists today advise women to free themselves from the restrictions of a bra, to refuse to wear clothes that accentuate sexual attraction and cosmetics that imply women are essentially incomplete without a façade. But they are not saying much that is completely new. In the 19th century many pages were written advocating the Turkish trouser style of the ill-fated bloomer costume and condemning the armpit-to-hip corset of the time. The basic point was the same. Or, when some feminists today speak bitterly of various exploitations of women by men, they are not

far away in spirit from early 19th century outcry against the sexual exploitation of slave women. Once we recognize that militant feminism should by rights be quite familiar to Americans, it may be a bit less frightening. Familiarity in itself does not of course mean automatic support—violence after all is also historically familiar to Americans—but at least familiarity may aid in an appraisal of feminism not colored by anxieties that come from dealing with something we have never known before.

It is important to notice that most of those who are disturbed by the contemporary display of feminism are comfortable with the accomplishments of earlier crusades. These critics have forgotten how outrageous 19th century militance was at the time; they assume the position of women in the 1970s is something that flowed naturally from common sense, forgetting that one era's common sense is the radicalism of a previous age. Ask someone who attacks present-day feminists if women should be denied the vote, reduced in legal status, and excluded from colleges and universities. There is an ironic incongruity in accepting (because accomplished) the advances of a previous age while resisting the pain of comparable efforts in one's own time.

This is connected with another observation. Many who defend the status quo seem to believe they are defending what-has-always-been against the threat of change. But such a view ignores the past. The position of women Americans take for granted today would not have been taken for granted 100 or even 50 years ago. Most of the arguments between feminists and anti-feminists today are actually not (as anti-feminists would have us believe) arguments between change and stability at all. Instead the arguments are over *rates* of change. The anti-feminists want to apply the brakes now that change has come this far; the feminists want to hit the accelerator. It is imperative to put the matter this way because it shifts the burden of proof to the proper shoulders. It is up to the anti-feminists to justify stopping change in the phase we see it. The feminists do not have to justify changing the status quo.

A review of the history of feminism in this country

should remind us, too, that feminists from the beginning have used whatever ideology and terminology were familiar and available to them. Feminist leaders have used in turn the rhetoric of liberal Protestantism, of abolitionism, and of the Progressive movement led by such men as Theodore Roosevelt. In its present-day resurgence, women's liberation often borrows from the rhetoric and the style of civil rights activism, Black Power, and the New Left. It would be surprising in fact if this did not occur. Those who are unfamiliar with or antagonized by the style of current radicalism should keep this in mind to prevent getting derailed from the main issue. The substance of what is being said, not the style of rhetoric, should get our chief attention.

Finally we should be aware that in many respects the present renewal of feminism is only picking up where things were prematurely dropped in 1920. Whether we agree with feminists or not, it is well to recognize that they are going back to a crusade whose goals have been long unmet. We should not be surprised by impatience and frustration. Even 1920 is a half-century past and agitation first began three-quarters of a century before that. We should also not be surprised by more radical proposals, since by hindsight it is clear the vote is not *the* key to changing women's status. Unless they are to give up, feminists must necessarily turn to other possibilities for change, such as education, employment, and especially the family.

There is thus much to learn from the history of feminism in this country. In this case we are not interested in that history for its own sake. Instead we need to apply the lessons to contemporary feminism. It is to the present-day scene that we now move.

VOICES IN WOMEN'S LIBERATION

4

Trying to survey the current feminist movement can be a bewildering task. There are all kinds of feminists talking today, and anti-feminists responding, and feminists responding to the anti-feminist response, and journalists trying to explain what's being said, and feminists and anti-feminists correcting the journalists, and the journalists correcting the corrections. Everyone is talking at the same time and the racket is deafening. Television and newspaper coverage is usually not much help, for all this does is something comparable to suddenly opening the door on a large, noisy party, listening for a moment, then slamming the door shut again. We manage to catch only a few phrases, and the quiet is a great relief.

Recognizing Different Voices

In the midst of all this hubbub we need some way of separating the different voices, of tuning in on one station at a time. This is not easy because there are many

voices speaking here and also because positions change over a period of time as leaders think further or react to the ideas of others. New literature on women's liberation seems to appear every week. But the more voices there are, the more necessary it is to have some means of separating them.

We have already seen that the contemporary feminist movement originated in two main wings. One emerged from a constituency of mature professional and business women. The other was an outgrowth of the primarily student radicalism of the 1960s. The growth and spread of the movement has led to substantial fragmentation. All the resulting groups are committed to changing the status of women, but they speak with different emphases, often with different vocabularies. It is not essential by way of introduction to explain the intricacies of personality and ideology dividing, for example, two groups in New York City. But it is useful to have some way to recognize the major variations in the predominant themes of feminist analysis. For this it may be helpful to imagine three sets of alternatives, each set connected by a line to form a continuum. Each continuum represents possible answers to one of the main questions feminists face, and the ends of each line represent the extreme alternatives developed so far.

Definition

Identical ..... Different

Strategy

Reform ..... Demolish

Tactics

Integrative Action ..... Separatist Education

Since the alternatives given in each of these three cases are the extremes of a continuum, many feminists will be somewhere in between. Furthermore, each continuum is somewhat independent of the other two. For example, two feminists might be at opposite ends of the spectrum in the matter of definition and yet agree in their tactics. Generally speaking, however, the moderate feminist wing tends to stay left of center on the diagram above while the radical feminists tend toward the right side.

Defining a Woman

The first question is elementary, but essential: what is a woman? Indignantly rejecting traditional answers, feminists have worked out a number of alternatives. One basic position is simply to say that a woman is a human being, a person different from a man only in certain anatomical details. What people identify as personality differences between male and female are not demonstrably inborn, but are most likely produced by social conditioning. Another possible answer agrees on the social conditioning, but insists women are fundamentally different from men. This is not a capitulation to anti-feminists, but may involve the belief that "feminine" traits (such as sensitivity and nurturance) are more beneficial and wholesome than "masculine" characteristics (such as aggressiveness). A more extreme variant of the same answer is illustrated by the feminist cartoon in which a pert female picket passing a loutish male onlooker observes, "I don't think I want to be equal. I'd rather stay superior." [1] Some feminists are convinced not only that women are clearly superior but that they can well do without men. To the delight of some journalists with an eye to the marketplace, some feminists idealize masturbation and lesbianism as an appropriate feminist response. "One thing that being straight [heterosexual] means to me is the final priority of male wishes, needs, and wants. This means supporting and defending interests that are counter to the needs and interests of women in their struggle for liberation." [2]

Changing Society

The second continuum is concerned with basic attitudes toward society and social structures. How much change is necessary to gain the proper status for women? There are two main alternatives here, the reform and the radical. The reformer assumes that by judicious tinkering with society as it stands, women may gain their rightful place. What is necessary then are some changes in the law and modifications of certain institutions. For example the goals of organizations such as WEAL and NOW usually fall into one of two categories. One cate-

gory is directed to end discrimination against women outside the home. The other goals are intended to reduce the burdens on women of child rearing. Specifically, "reform" feminists have concentrated on such things as:

- the Equal Rights Amendment to the constitution to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, just as discrimination is now prohibited on the basis of race;
- tough enforcement of existing laws to insure equal treatment of women by employers in hiring, pay and promotions;
- true equality in education, particularly in graduate and professional schools;
- income tax allowances for the expenses of child care, and the establishment of child-care centers for working mothers;
- recognition that society should carry the cost of child bearing by provision for maternity leaves rather than forcing women to pay the cost by required resignations and loss of seniority;
- changing the law so that women may legally procure abortions to terminate unwanted pregnancies.[3]

The other, radical, alternative in basic attitudes toward society and social structures assumes that only the most sweeping changes will produce a situation in which women are properly recognized. Though not necessarily, this view usually agrees with the need for changes such as abortion reform, child-care centers, and constitutional amendment. But, feminists in this camp insist, it is necessary to go much further; 19th century feminists failed by not adhering to a radical analysis of their problems, and that mistake must not be repeated. (Some radical feminists in fact accuse "reformists" of being essentially diversionary, of helping to shift attention away from proper goals.) What point is there, the radical position asks, in having women struggle to join men in their rat race? Why fight, in Germaine Greer's phrase, for "free admission to the world of the ulcer and coronary?"[4] Why crusade to gain the man's "right" to do meaningless

and deadening work at some office or factory? To achieve "equality" with men now would be a step backwards. What women need instead is a different society.

Two characteristics of our society identified as especially repressive for women are the nuclear family and capitalism.

> *Families free men to work by harnessing women to raise children, each woman with one man's children. This is not only unnecessary, but destructive. It keeps women and children isolated, deprives children of the company of men most of the time, and deprives women of the company of adults, which is enough to turn an adult brain into mush. . . . Why couldn't some people care for many children? Or better still, why not end the debilitating division of labor and have a community in which all adults spend some time helping children?* [5]

Since in the nuclear family, children are cared for at the expense of women's lives, "The nuclear family must be destroyed and people must find better ways of living together." [6] Families are important for capitalism, however, because they enable employers to hire a man and gain the unpaid services of his wife to free him for his job; because women are trained to see employment as peripheral to their "true" role and thus can serve as a cheap pool of part-time labor; and because families encourage conspicuous consumption. As should be expected among those who take Marxist analysis seriously, there is lively discussion at the radical end of the spectrum on the precise relationship between capitalism and exploitation of women. One view, no longer often articulated in the movement, is that the fall of capitalism is the crux of the issue for women. Another view is simply that "capitalism, imperialism, and racism are symptoms of male supremacy—sexism." [7] But whether seen as cause or symptom, capitalism is frequently under attack.

When asked, what do you want? the reformist position can be quite specific: a constitutional amendment, tax legislation, abortion reform, and so on. The radical position is at a disadvantage when asked the same question. As Robin Morgan complains, "that's what they always ask us, as if they had expected us, like tidy housekeepers,

to come up in five short years with the magic remedy cleanser that will wipe clean the unbelievable mess men have created from their position of power during the past five thousand years." [8] In fact there is no generally accepted blueprint. The most promising alternative is some type of communal living, and this is experimented with widely. But even among feminists opposed in principle to the nuclear family, there is a lively awareness of problems in communes. One group of women, while affirming an urge toward communal living, candidly explains their hesitations:

> *We feel a need to improve our present relationship before extending into a larger group. At this stage we still have a need for physical and emotional privacy which we are not ready to give up for constant interaction with a larger number of people. We fear that our personal independence would be overshadowed by responsibilities to a group. . . . Anxiety about the sexual tensions which might possibly occur make us apprehensive about living intimately with other men and women. We're afraid that other people might not be sensitive to our children's needs.*[9]

Obviously this is a long way from the anti-feminist fantasy of sexually-deviant women seizing on feminism as an excuse for rushing into a promiscuous commune and free love.

Planning for Change

The third continuum involves actual tactics. This is of course closely tied to analysis of the problems and context women face. One alternative—the one that has gained the most public attention because of the militance of its rhetoric—is uncompromisingly separatistic and is concerned with consciousness raising. The separatism rests on an outspokenly negative judgment of men. As one woman reflected, "I once thought that all that was necessary was to make men understand that they would achieve their own liberation, too, by joining in the struggle for women's liberation: but it has come to me to seem a little too much like the chickens trying to educate the chicken farmer." [10] Another writer is considerably blunter: "I can, for example, freely and openly

hate men; no more lip-service to my love for all humanity and not adopting hatred because 'that's a male characteristic' while I hate silently, with pent-up self-destroying rage. Men as they are today use, oppress, hate and torture women." [11] According to this view much of the problem is that women, living intimately with men (their oppressors), are kept divided; they do not realize they are part of a group that is being systematically put down. Marriage thus is a key barrier. It is, according to one analysis, "a relationship which is oppressive politically, exhausting physically, stereotyped emotionally and sexually, and atrophying intellectually." Marriage is to women what integration is to blacks—for the radicals a very bad thing indeed.[12]

Characteristically, feminists who are closest to these views devote their energies especially to helping individual women through emergencies, and to education. Typical means are a large amount of exhortative and theoretical literature and the consciousness-raising rap session. The latter may resemble group therapy in some respects, but is sharply distinguished from therapy by feminists. Group therapy, they insist, assumes there is something wrong in the individual that is to be corrected; consciousness-raising assumes that basic changes must come in society. The main goal is to show individual women they are not queer or neurotic in their frustrations and aspirations—that many other women share identical feelings. The groups function to bring women closer together in candid conversations, usually leading toward a stronger sense of how their roles have been shaped and limited.

The other end of the tactics spectrum rests on the conviction that women and men need each other and that practicality, if nothing else, dictates steering clear of separatist appeals or solutions. People are going to continue to want stable heterosexual relationships, babies, and a means to earn an independent living, and it is fantasy, not revolutionary, to pretend they won't. NOW's motto, "Full equality for women in truly equal partnership with men" nicely embodies this "integrative" position. Such assumptions are generally connected with specific action programs that work within the system; the sponsorship,

for instance, of concerted public drives to gain tangible, political goals. Again the work of NOW and WEAL is a good example. It often involves energetic lobbying among governmental officials and legislators, and in some cases legal action in the courts.

In the past few pages we have been talking about alternative answers to three specific questions. It is easy in doing this to forget that these alternatives are best seen not as rigid categories but as extremes on a continuum. In some cases the majority of feminists are not found at either end but somewhere between. And, as we have already noted, over time feminists may move in one direction or the other along the continuum, responding to further reflection or new experience. (There are some signs that the radicals are becoming more political and the moderates more radical.) In other words dividing things as we have is a device for analysis. In actuality matters are not so nicely delineated.

But the three basic questions remain. How should a woman be defined? How much in society must be changed to give women their proper status? What are the best means to the goal? The answers provide a way of separating the various voices of women's liberation, a way of comparing one speaker with another.

IT'S A MAN'S WORLD

5

There are far more whooping cranes in North America than there are women in Congress. About 85 percent of elementary school teachers are women, but less than 25 percent of elementary school principals are. The median wage for men working full time is about $7,600, but women working equivalent hours earn only about 60 percent of that, approximately $4,400. In a recent academic year Harvard University had 22 women on a faculty of 1,550, and no woman had tenure. In a number of states a married woman may not retain her maiden name, but her husband may change his and the change will be binding on her. In some states, a married woman needs court approval to engage in an independent business.[1]

The System of Discrimination

These facts point to a social system that actively discriminates against women. More is involved here than social conditioning, though that too plays a role. Dis-

crimination is visible in its crudest, and economically most powerful, form in education and employment. Better jobs today almost invariably require higher education, and women face barriers there even before they reach the job market. Discrimination is apparent already in college admissions and still more obvious in many graduate, business, and professional schools. One research team recently sent out bogus admissions applications to 240 colleges. The replies showed that a girl with high grades was as likely to be admitted as a boy with comparable scores. But of those with low grades invented for the experiment, boys were much more likely to be admitted than girls.[2]

After college admission, barriers to women are progressively more formidable. Some graduate fellowships will not even consider women. Others ask women applicants directly about plans for marriage and children, questions male applicants do not usually hear, and would be offended by if they did. Given current legal action, few professional schools would admit having quotas to limit the number of women they will accept (though quotas were known as recently as the mid-1960s), but enough deans are willing to speak disparagingly of women as students that one does not have to make elaborate inferences about admissions decisions.

In terms of the much-touted earning power, a college degree earned by a woman is simply not worth as much as the same degree earned by a man—something colleges and universities do not mention when they collect tuition or seek donations. In fact the median wage for working women with five years of higher education is about comparable to that of men who complete high school. The classic cliché is that when a woman graduate applies to a business firm for a job, she is given a typing test while a man is given an aptitude test: she is headed for a dead-end secretarial slot while he is a possibility as a management trainee. Discrimination in employment ranges from the bottom to the top of the training and salary spectrum. One law professor who surveyed 1,000 recent women law graduates turned up 2,000 separate instances in which employer interviews told them it was against firm policy to hire women lawyers. Sexual dis-

crimination was by then illegal, as the lawyers surely must have known.[3] When a proposal to change draft exemptions for graduate study was made a few years ago, the president of Harvard was among those who objected. Eliminating deferments, he said, would mean that graduate schools would be left only "with the lame, the halt, and the women."

In employment patterns, the traditional place for women is that of assistant to a man—secretary to businessman, teller to a banker, nurse to a doctor, and researcher to a magazine writer or professor. The typical newspaper advertisement calls for a "gal Friday." Generally speaking the jobs most readily accessible to women have low pay and little status. One third of all women who work are employed in just seven categories: secretary, sales clerk, private household worker, elementary school teacher, bookkeeper, nurse, waitress. This is one of the reasons why 20 percent of working women earn less than $3,000 a year compared to eight percent of working men. Only three percent of working women earn more than $10,000 compared to 28 percent of the men who work. But another reason for the disparity is that women are paid less even when they work in the same field as men. Of those engaged in sales, for example, women earn only 41 percent of male salesmen's income. At best, in office work, women have only 65 percent of a man's income.

Even in fields traditionally dominated by women, such as elementary teaching, library science, nursing and home economics, men are more likely to be chosen for top positions. In fact in some professions there have been conscious efforts to promote this "to give the field more prestige." Language can be an important indicator of status. In the traditionally feminine field of food preparation, elegant restaurants look for men rather than women to head the kitchen, and the employee is then called a chef, not a cook.

Working women may also suffer in company retirement and insurance programs designed to pay higher benefits to a male than to a female employee. In many fields it is taken for granted a woman will not rise beyond a certain point in either status or salary, regardless

of her qualifications. The highest median wage in the U.S. is earned by white working men; then come black working men, and after them come white women, with black women at the bottom of the scale.

There is a special type of discrimination reserved for poor women with dependent children on welfare. Toward these women society has contradictory attitudes. To the middle-class wife society says, in effect, your children demand your presence at home and you must remain there and be supported there. But to the poor mother with children the society says, in effect, you should work to support yourself and your children and make other arrangements for caring for your children while you are working. Because they are women, whatever jobs they are able to get are even more poorly paid than unskilled male labor. And there are few day-care centers to which they have access or can afford.

Our economy treats women as a pool of labor, to be drawn from or dammed as the situation (not their preferences) indicates. When the economy lags and jobs are scarce, there is a great deal of public rhetoric about the problems of working women, the desirability (usually for the sake of the family) of keeping women at home, and the injustice of a woman taking work from a man. But when labor is in demand, as in wartime, then national magazines feature the satisfactions of working, emphasize that women can replace men even in heavy manufacturing to a surprising extent, and discover evidence that working mothers do not damage their children. (A look at the August 1944 issue of the widely accessible *National Geographic Magazine* illustrates this nicely.) A less polite way of putting this is that images of women and employment are manipulated without much concern for traditional expectations or the individual woman.

In summary, women are concentrated in lower-paying jobs. In whatever work women do they are usually paid less than men. Their unemployment rate is significantly higher. Moreover the gap between the median pay of men and women has been increasing in the last decade; women today earn less in proportion to men than they did ten years ago.

Justifying the System

These generalizations do not come from feminist imaginations. They can all be amply documented by government statistics. How can such obvious discrimination be justified? There are quite a number of ways to "explain" this and they are so common and accepted by so many men (and women) that they are worth considering one after another.

One justification offered is that different fields require different abilities and it so happens that those uniquely suited to women are unfortunately not well paid. If the consequences of such naivete was not so serious, this position would be amusing. This line of thinking is in case after case simply a way of providing a biological rationalization for "what is." One writer tells the story of a foreign visitor who noticed that in an electronics factory, assembly line workers were all women, and was told, "It's close work, and women have the finger dexterity for it." When the same visitor noticed in a medical school that all the brain surgeons were men, the answer was, "But they've got to be men. Brain surgery takes a steady hand."[4] Sex-linkage of jobs has not been consistent even in our own history. Obstetrics, for instance, was for long limited to women (as midwives), and elementary school teachers and private secretaries were men.

Our sex-linkages appear still less self-evident if we look beyond our borders. For example, though in the United States dentistry is now a male field, in Denmark 75 percent of the dentists are women. In various cultures around the world, anthropologists and sociologists have documented all kinds of sex-linkages at odds with those we take for granted here. One generalization does seem consistent, however. Women are usually assigned tasks granted low status by any given society. For example, one observer reported Filipino women more likely than American women to enter the professions and business, probably because these positions were not so highly valued in an agricultural culture.[5]

The point of these examples is that our ideas of men's work and women's work are not the result of a carefully thought out apportioning of jobs to sex, but are

instead heavily dependent on the society in which we live. Of course someone might still object that women just are not built for certain occupations. And that is probably true. Most women would not qualify for professional football. But then, most men do not either. Most women, too, are physically incapable of lifting ten tons of construction steel at one time. But men do it all the time. They use machines with controls requiring about the same amount of strength as opening a balky file drawer. Some manufacturing operations, we might grant, have not yet installed machinery that would enable women to do the job. Instead these factories continue to use men who get hernias and back pains and heart trouble. In sum, an objective analysis of a great many sex-linked jobs will show that sex is not a valid differentiating trait.

Another frequently-heard explanation for the absence of women in managerial positions is that they are too emotional. When extremely frustrated or under stress they lose control and because of the menstrual cycle are at intervals difficult to work with. But there is not much concrete data to back this up. And it is instructive to recognize the double standard operating here. As one writer spiritedly observes, "women are not more incapacitated by menstruation than men are by their drinking habits, their hypertension, their ulcers, and their virility fears." [6] A man who "blows his top" in the office is surely not in complete control of himself, yet few people suggest men should therefore be barred from management; in fact the display of profanity and rage is sometimes admired as evidence of aggressive temperament and drive. And one of the traits of the top-notch private (female) secretary is the ability to see when a storm is brewing and either head it off or work around it. As part of her job she is expected to humor a temperamental boss in a way we would not expect a male to work with a female superior.

Still another explanation for discrimination is that women are not really committed to their work the way men are, as is obvious in high female turnover and absentee rates. But government studies in the late 1960s showed that women lost fewer days than men because

of injury or illness. Furthermore the key to rates of turnover proved not to be sex, but such factors as the levels of skill required and income and age. A woman doctor's absenteeism was very low compared to that of a male assembly-line worker. In other words, if many women do not seem as committed to their jobs as men, much of the reason is that the jobs are not interesting enough to be very committed to.[7]

Yet a further rationale for the employment discrimination is that women do not need the money anyway; they are working for luxuries. But government statistics show there are about 1.5 million women who are the sole wage earners in their families. In addition, in many families, only the wife's earnings make possible economic stability above the poverty line. And in many other instances one would have to ask if a woman is working for luxuries when her earnings help pay her children's college tuition. Finally, it is not hard to imagine the outrage if a highly successful male salesman asked for a raise and was told that in the company's estimation he was living quite well enough already and hence a ceiling had been put on his salary and commissions.

The Undergirding

This list of rationalizations for active, conscious discrimination against women is not exhaustive. Nor will the answers given here really end the argument because behind all this is still a different type of discrimination, what might be called a structural discrimination. Ironically here one kind of discrimination (the structural) is used to justify another type (the overt we have already viewed). Structural discrimination is much more impersonal, and hence difficult to come to grips with, and is imbedded integrally in the way we live and think. In some cases it is literally built into our society.

One example is suburban living—the actuality or aspiration for millions of Americans. With its detached, single family dwellings and its diffusion, the suburb poses a serious hurdle to improving the status of women. Most of the homes are designed so that it is awkward or impossible to have live-in assistance with children (if it

were available). It is equally difficult to combine, to whatever degree, more than one household. (One of the reasons most people find the idea of any type of communal living repugnant is because they imagine it in present-day buildings rather than in something designed especially with a different family model in mind.)

Structural barriers to women thus begin with architecture and continue with town planning. The suburb establishes a spatial pattern that separates by a wide margin the working world from the home world, accentuating the difference between the two. The only ones left in the suburb during the day are those who do not work, the women and the children. Thus the very geography of the suburb tends to accentuate sex-linkage of men with work and women with the home. The culture of the suburb is not likely to offer much support to women who violate the norm, and the segregation of women there makes it difficult for them to acquire knowledge of employment practices of help to them. The distance of suburbs from most employers limits the accessibility to challenging jobs, and long travel time added to time on the job is prohibitive for women whose families insist the household is her responsibility. Finally, the suburb is an extremely difficult place to find adequate assistance in caring for pre-school children. If day-care centers do exist they are likely to be at an inconvenient distance, and there is usually no adequate public transportation by which sitters can come to individual homes.

Other kinds of structural barriers are built into society in less tangible, but no less secure, ways. In our economy, for instance, we expect a career to impose burdens that can be met only with assistance from those at home. A wife's affection and attention are useful, perhaps essential, to offset the discipline and tension demanded by industrial society. Besides this, someone is needed to look after interior decorating, cleaning and cooking, to keep up contacts with kin, to entertain business associates graciously and advantageously and to act as parent-and-a-half for the children. The functions a wife may perform here are so valuable that an observer of women in the professions reported one of their problems is not having wives.

Feminists point out with justice that we usually pay for the work of one, but in reality depend on the services of two people, gaining the work of the wife without paying comparable compensation for it. But society sanctions this. In fact if a wife complains about it a great deal she is considered selfish, a shrew. And of course there is a double standard at work here. A husband who complains about a career-committed wife is considered justified by society. If a father has difficulty finding time to spend with his children, that is thought unfortunate. If a mother has difficulty, one inquires harshly why she had the children in the first place.

Still another barrier to women built into the system is career patterns a woman can meet easily only by foregoing children. This type of structural discrimination is visible, for example, in medical internships and residencies so demanding in time that a woman doctor with young children must make extraordinary arrangements at home. The same sort of thing was admitted by a spokesman for an important law firm: "We certainly don't mean to discriminate against women, but our hiring policies don't fit very well with their lives. We hire all our lawyers right out of law school and we never hire any part-time lawyers. If you want to be a partner in our shop, you have to start young, work longer and harder than the other juniors, and stick with it." [8]

What is happening in each of these cases is that women are being required to pay at their individual expense all kinds of social costs, particularly the costs of child rearing. For society, for men, it is on the surface a highly advantageous type of cost accounting. Debits are charged to the account of the individual mother; eventual assets are credited to society. Everyone has a stake in the next generation, yet the individual mother not only is not paid for her contribution, but is penalized in her life outside the home. As the period between children and death increases, so of course do the penalties. It is significant to note that employers of men drafted for military service are required by law to grant leaves of absence and to accept the returned veteran without penalty in pay or seniority. Not only are there few such laws for working women who bear children, but in most states women

fired for being pregnant are not permitted to collect unemployment compensation. Some employers have routinely fired women who became pregnant, then hired them back later—but without seniority and fringe benefits they had built up.[9]

Thus women are called upon to make disproportionate sacrifices for the welfare of society. There is in itself nothing wrong with making a sacrifice, particularly for one's own children, but it is wrong in this case for at least two reasons. One is that it is not a necessary sacrifice. Things *could* be done differently. The social system we know is not the only one imaginable, nor is it perfect. One does not even have to assume that a perfect society is possible to believe ours could be improved.

The other reason why the sacrifice is wrong in this case is that it is not a free one. No one asks a woman if she wants to pay these costs; they are assessed against her regardless. (And if she seeks to escape by not having children, she must bear the cost of being labeled selfish and is made to carry at least some of the expenses anyway.) It is not hard to imagine the incredulity with which people would greet a proposal that henceforth all blue-eyed Americans should be assigned housework, primary responsibility in child-rearing, and a secondary, service role in the employment force. Yet the same actuality, when on the basis of sex, is greeted with complacency.

It is at this point that some will say, usually in an agitated, even furious way, something like this:

> But women *are* free to choose what they want, and millions and millions of women are perfectly happy, despite all this "discrimination." They *chose* to make these sacrifices as wives and mothers and feel satisfaction in doing so.

But what about the women who are *not* satisfied? The rejoinder just paraphrased implicitly assumes dissatisfied women are a small, though vocal, minority of malcontents. But how small does a minority have to be before society may justifiably ignore it? Ten percent? Five percent? Even one percent of all American women is roughly a million people.

In any case we have come full circle to the matter

of socialization discussed in a previous chapter. From their earliest years, girls are taught by word and even more by example that a woman takes a certain specific role in society. A girl is taught that a woman is to be emotional, compliant, dependent and deferential to men. She also learns that a career requires other, "masculine" traits at odds with these, and learns that an attempt to combine traits may lead to some uncomfortable ambivalences within herself. If she is perceptive she also learns a woman cannot really win: if she emphasizes feminine virtues on the job, she is said to be taking unfair advantage; if she plays by masculine rules, she is said to be a castrating bitch. She is also continually informed that success for a woman is different than for a man; it is a happy marriage and attractive children. But this, she may find, makes single-minded concentration on career preparation difficult and long-range planning impossible.

About the only alternative to all but the most gifted and determined is to enter some field where the entrance requirements are not too high and one may leave for child-bearing and return five or ten years later. Such an interval when skills may grow rusty and knowledge go out of date eliminates many challenging and lucrative areas altogether and cuts advancement to superior positions in most of the remaining. Therefore it is wise to get as much satisfaction out of husband and family and home as possible. And after all this women are told there is something innate urging them toward devoting themselves exclusively to their families, and something inborn urging them into jobs rather than careers. Once again, the most basic point is not that teaching or nursing or housekeeping is wrong, but that the range of possibilities feasible for most women is so much narrower than the range open to most men.

What we have described is the belief in the inherent inferiority of one group to another, the erection of a social system to confirm this belief, and the conditioning of the young to perpetuate both the belief and the system. If we were talking about black people in this country, what we have outlined would be called racism.

INSTITUTIONALIZED SEXISM: THE CHURCH AS A CASE STUDY

6

"Prejudice against women is the only kind that is respectable any more." The indictment by feminists may make some people uncomfortable, but it is well-founded. Discrimination against the poor, against the Jews, against blacks and Indians and Mexicans may still be found in abundance, of course, but people of good will regret it and work to end it. These people would rightly object to jokes depending on racial stereotypes of stupid or wily or improvident blacks. And they would be horrified if their children talked casually of "niggers." But curiously enough these same people may feel quite comfortable telling stories that depend on sexual stereotypes of stupid or wily or improvident women. And they find it amusing to overhear precocious references by children to "dumb blondes." They understand a black man's outrage if forced to listen to a racist joke, but think a woman humorless if she objects to a joke that makes women seem foolish.

This prejudice is widely held and well cemented into the foundations of our society. It appears in almost every institution we know, including those we customarily think of as devoted at least in part to noble causes, to attacks on injustice. Government, higher education, law, medicine, religion—all play a role. As institutions they foster and perpetuate, often knowingly and deliberately, many kinds of discrimination against women. It is worth tracing such attitudes through at least one institution to recognize the ingrained character and the impact of this bias. The church is a good choice for this purpose, both because it is an institution Christians have a responsibility for and because it is an institution under heavy fire from feminists.

Ancient Roots

One early feminist leader is said to have encouraged a weary lieutenant with, "Call on God, my dear; She will help you." A women's liberation newspaper headline ran, "God Created Woman In Her Own Image."[1] Both reflect the feminist indictment of the church. That indictment, an extremely serious one, might be summarized as follows:

> The church is one of the most obstinately anti-woman institutions in our society. Piously preaching love and the commonalty of sinners before God, it has established beliefs, attitudes and practices demeaning, even crippling, to women. As an institution it has traditionally distinguished itself fighting in the reactionary rear-guard against advances in women's rights.

This is only an outline of the charges against the church. There is a long bill of particulars we should review in this chapter.

The crux of the problem is the failure of many churchmen to recognize that opinions picked up by the Judaeo-Christian tradition from cultures quite different from our own include a strong bias against women. In the Old Testament, for example, God is usually referred to as "he." In the version of creation given in Genesis 2,

woman is considered subsidiary to man, for she is formed of Adam's rib. And in the account of the fall, it is Eve who yields to the serpent and then tempts Adam with forbidden fruit. Later legislative and historical books of the Old Testament demonstrate that the Hebrews valued women distinctly less than men. Marital practices such as polygamy, the male privilege of divorce, and unequal penalties for sexual relationship outside marriage put women under male proprietary domination. The Hebrews were much devoted to ritual cleanness of both sexes, but women were the objects of special concern. A woman was ritually unclean for seven days after the birth of a male child, but for two weeks after a female child (Lev. 12:2-5). Hebrew religion was likewise dominated by men. Women could not be priests, nor were they even thought competent to study the law, much less teach it.

In the New Testament there is further evidence of opposition to an equal place for women (and one can recognize this without going so far as the radical feminist charges that in her pregnancy the Virgin Mary was a typical female victim of male sex dominance and aggressiveness). Most notable are 1 Corinthians 11 and 14 and, most stringently, 1 Timothy 2:

> *A woman must be a learner, listening quietly and with due submission. I do not permit a woman to be a teacher, nor must woman domineer over man; she should be quiet. For Adam was created first, and Eve afterwards; and it was not Adam who was deceived; it was the woman who, yielding to deception, fell into sin. Yet she will be saved through motherhood—if only women continue in faith, love, and holiness, with a sober mind.*

Nor is this the end of the story. Many of the early church fathers were terrified of sex, and they tended to project responsibility for their preoccupations onto women. The male represented the mind, intellect, and reason; the female represented the body, sensuality, and evil. Women were not only inferior, a sort of defective male, but dangerous. As Tertullian wrote, "Do you not know that you are Eve? . . . You are the devil's gateway. . . . How easily you destroyed man, the image of God.

Because of the death which you brought upon us, even the Son of God had to die."[2] Thus the image of Eve (and hence of woman) as temptress was accentuated. Original sin could be identified as sexual passion and sexual passion with woman.

Small wonder that as the office of the ministry developed it was gradually restricted to men, nor that priests were not allowed the connection of marriage with women. No individual characteristics of intelligence or personality were quite sufficient to overcome the fatal flaw of female sex. All the while the church claimed credit for elevating women by its devotion to the figure of Mary. But this was the usual case of a woman being defined by her relation to a man, and was also woman on a pedestal; the traits were carefully selected ones: chastity, submission, maternity, obedience, and sorrow.

The Reformation did not really represent a substantial improvement. In fact, the virtual termination of religious orders for women in Protestantism removed the one institutionalized base from which women had from time to time exercised power in the church. By closing the convents, the Reformation made the role of the single adult woman more difficult in society, for there were few other roles open to her. By stressing the legitimacy of religious vocation in the family, the Reformation ironically added pressure on women to find their proper place only in the home.

The American church continued the tradition and has been among the most active opponents of feminist goals. In the 19th century clergy were often firmly resistant to the suffrage campaign. One nationally-known Protestant minister warned in 1873 that when women left their proper sphere they would get bigger hands and feet and become "thinner, sharp-featured, lank and dry."[3] Lutherans, along with others, fought passage of the 19th amendment as a violation of God's will. Once that passed, ministers were again active in warning women, particularly mothers, against finding employment outside the home. Protestant as well as Catholic clergy made strong efforts to prevent Christian women from using contraceptives to schedule and limit children. That battle lost churchmen are now trying to beat back a drive by

women to gain control over decisions regarding abortion. Truly, as Elizabeth Janeway remarks, "If there's nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come, there is nothing more . . . pervasive than an idea whose time won't go." [4]

A further process has been at work over the whole period. As sociologists and theologians have pointed out, the church has gradually encountered more and more resistance to involvement in political, social and economic questions in society at large; its sphere has been increasingly limited to the home and family. With other concerns preempted or truncated, the church's response has been to absolutize family life as the norm and there has been a tendency to assume that the suburban nuclear family in a separate single-family home—the type most restrictive for women—is the truly *Christian* form.

All the while, of course, the church as an institution has been a male bastion. This has almost always been the case. In 19th century immigrant Lutheran congregations the males sat on one side of the church and females on the other (and naturally the men preceded the women to the altar for communion). The seating has since changed, but the mentality is still basically the same. Only recently have more conservative Protestant groups allowed women to vote in general church affairs. In some Protestant denominations and in the Roman Catholic Church women are not permitted to become ordained clergy. In other bodies where women are ordained there are so few they are generally considered freaks, a sideshow apart from the action in the main tent. Women's traditional role was well summarized by an editor who observed approvingly of one church convention in the 1920s, "the men raised their voice in denouncing error and in defending the Truth. And the women saw that the men were made comfortable, both before and after the fray." [5]

Should Old Arguments Survive?

Thus, instead of challenging the values of the world in attitudes toward women, the church has generally confirmed them. Instead of confronting the secular with a distinct thrust, the church has conformed to it. More

outrageously still, conservative church people accuse feminists of seeking to shape the church by contemporary secular values, ignoring the shaping of their own views by past secular values. The depth of the church's set against women may be measured by the consistency with which the biblical testimony quite at odds with traditional views of women has been explained away or ignored. For example, the Genesis 2 account of creation with its emphasis on Adam's rib has been the focus of attention rather than the more egalitarian account in Genesis 1 ("So God created man in his own image; in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them"). Instead of stressing the masculine image of God, one might just as well urge that the real point was that Jehovah was not a mere fertility idol; God is neither male nor female, but eternal.

In the New Testament, Christian spokesmen have preferred to stress the passages in Timothy instead of considering the example of Jesus himself. Remarkably enough, Jesus says nothing in the Gospels about a secondary status for women. In fact he repeatedly displays "feminine" traits—precisely a reason why much of what he taught has been so disconcerting for many in cultures that place high value on "masculine" qualities. In his relationships with Mary and Martha, Mary Magdalene, the Samaritan woman, the woman taken in adultery and others, Jesus was notably unbound by Jewish custom and by all accounts treated women as persons rather than primarily as women. Pastors who preach on Mary and Martha, attempting to stress Christ's point and yet keep women in a nurturant role, have a hard time doing justice to the text.

The treatment of the verses in 1 Timothy is predictable enough. Churchmen have been much more comfortable with the apparently antifeminist passages, despite the difficulties they pose (do they really mean women are saved, or even fulfilled, by motherhood only?) and the variety of interpretations possible. The words of St. Paul to the Galatians—"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus"—get short shrift in discussions of women. The conservative explanation for

such apportioning of emphasis involves the idea of orders or organization of society. A distinction is made between an order of creation and an order of redemption. The whole argument is an important one to recognize, for it, or the effects of it, underlie many attitudes toward women in the church, even though many clergy would reject the original if faced with a bold statement of it.

Briefly, in this view when St. Paul speaks of there being no distinctions among Christians, he is referring to the redemptive order or the state in which physical distinctions are transcended by the unity given the church through Christ. At the same time that they are part of this order, however, Christians are nevertheless still in the world and hence subject to another order, the organization of the world established by God at creation. In this order of creation, there are levels of authority designed to maintain a coherent society, and here God has ordained that women are subject to men. For example, "in matrimony it is the husband that has the responsibility of decisions as a way of preserving an orderly way of life." [6] Once set at the beginning, the order of creation is immutable.

The order of creation would appear to be bedrock for a position on the status of women, but the support it offers is less unyielding than at first seems. One rebuttal to the argument is to point out that God did not construct the world like a watch, to run until eternity on certain changeless patterns. Instead he intervenes in history and in so doing changes the orders of creation.[7]

Another, more radical, approach is to question whether the order of creation is a useful concept, at least in matters such as this. At one time or another, this argument has been employed by conscientious Christian men and women to justify racism and slavery and anti-democratic governments. It has been prominent in past struggles against woman's suffrage, against women working outside the home, and against birth control. It has, in other words, a long and disreputable history. It is simply not as culturally neutral a concept as some would like to believe, but instead is the sort of argument made to order for people with axes to grind, people who all the

while insist they are not grinding axes, that their views are not culturally influenced. Over the centuries, after changing the church's position on one issue after another, Christians have repeatedly had to say, "We were previously confused on what was part of the order of creation and we now realize what we thought was part of it really is not." Now simply because an argument has been misused in the past does not invalidate it completely, of course. But it ought to make us highly skeptical of its continued use. In approaching contemporary feminism, there is no reason to be certain that at long last we have the insight and disinterested neutrality to rid ourselves of preconceptions in determining the essential order of creation.

Perhaps the precedent of attitudes toward slavery may be helpful here. Forms of slavery were known and taken for granted in both the Old Testament and the New. St. Paul commanded obedience of slaves and his admonitions and examples from the Bible were frequently cited by the church in the centuries following. Some defended slavery as part of the natural order. After all, was it not logical that if some were to command, the good of society demanded others obey? In the 19th century a decisive change in opinion occurred. And to 20th century Christians, slavery seems completely alien to basic concepts of their faith. The uniformity of our opposition would have baffled our equally pious predecessors of several centuries ago. On the question of slavery, in other words, the church matured, and did so, moreover, not in the era of the early fathers, but at a relatively recent date. Is it not time for a similar maturation in views of women?

Breaking with the Past

Blueprints for that maturation vary among feminists, partly because for some, religion is an irrelevancy, of interest only as one of the barriers to full realization of womanhood. However, those who are actively concerned about the church—and they are many—are in general agreement about change. Most basically, they say, the church must recognize institutionally the impli-

cations of women's equal status before God. Sexual discrimination has no place in the church. Women should have the opportunity and obligation to serve in all areas of the church's life. To say "Men are *not* superior to women; they have simply been given a different set of responsibilities" is—in light of the apportioning of the responsibilities—simply playing with words.[8] As an institution the church has functioned like most other institutions, confining women to low-status clerical and service positions, or shunting them into separate channels of advancement (women's auxiliaries are a good example) where they do not threaten the male bureaucracy or, more recently, giving them highly visible, but token, positions. None of this is defensible in an institution proposing to take Christianity seriously.

Beyond this looms the matter of ordination. To advocates of ordination for women, the *de jure* refusal to allow women to enter this single office in the church and the *de facto* refusal to accept ordained women already in the ministry are exasperating and embarrassing anachronisms. If there is any issue that forces an end to beating around euphemistic bushes, that forces men to speak straight out of women's *sub*ordination, it is this one. But there is a tendency for those who are conservatives on this issue to evade the implications of their position. Their retreat has been by stages over so many decades that they can conceal even from themselves the inconsistencies in basic approach when they accept the present secular status of women, but hold the line on ordination. Ordination cannot be kept in some kind of isolation—unless religion itself is. No one should be allowed to gloss over the fundamental judgment of women contained in the decision that they lack the prerequisites to be ordained.

In denominations that have not agreed to ordain women, the issues are, at least ostensibly, theological and the arguments so complex there is little point in trying to rehearse them here. In denominations that do ordain women, the questions are familiar enough from secular institutions. Our society no more encourages girls to be ministers than it encourages them to be dentists. Those who are ordained are embarrassing anomalies in a sys-

tem of male church officials; they don't fit. And there are so few of them that lack of personal acquaintance among the laity permits all kinds of stereotyped negative reactions.

In either case, as one woman puts it, "ordination in itself is not the basic issue . . . the basic issue is one of justice, recognition, and the opportunity to work at full competence and in communal fellowship." [9] It is wise to phrase the matter so, because there is latent in the issue a dangerous parochialism. Ordination and related questions are no more the key to improving the status of women in society at large than the vote was earlier. To overemphasize its importance is to lose sight of the needs of the vast majority of women. For those who relish irony there is much to savor in the picture of the clergyman in his study earnestly preparing articles and talks favoring women clergy while downstairs his wife struggles with kitchen, cleaning, and babies, and a daughter thumbs through women's magazines while watching the Miss America contest on television.

An end to discrimination in the church is something with high appeal which draws the attention of much of the women's liberation movement. But for a much smaller number of thoughtful critics, usually women with formal training in theology, an awareness of the church's blatantly male bias is only a preliminary coping with the essence of new perspectives. For example, some suggest that the common emphasis on pride as sin and on humility as virtue may express a masculine preoccupation. "For women . . . sinfulness might be more appropriately related to lack of pride and self-affirmation." [10] Humility may be an avoidance of maturity, and self-abnegation a flight from responsibility. Whether there will actually emerge a more developed pattern of thought along these lines, it is too early to say, but it is something to be watched with considerable interest.

Finally, the church has been roundly scored for its resistance to abortion-law reform. Isn't it typical of male arrogance, asks women's liberation, that men, who have never even known what it is to be pregnant, think they have the competence, without consulting women, to tell them they have no rights in determining whether to

complete a pregnancy? Isn't it a typically male put-down of women to sponsor heated campaigns against changing abortion laws that penalize women, and then remain indifferent to legislation to increase financial assistance to aid women who bore the children they were forced to give birth to? Isn't the church, in resisting abortion as murder, itself guilty of the same crime, by forcing women desiring abortions to resort to clandestine practitioners and dangerous procedures? Where the issue involves women, who have no real influence in the church, the church is uncompromising in protecting the life of the fetus; when the issue involves men as well, then the church can develop all kinds of exceptions to permit the taking of lives of adult humans. Is this just a coincidence?

Some of these questions are loaded. Some may be irreverent, some irrelevant. But they all have to be answered, for quite obviously if the feminists had their way, the church would never be the same again. Nor would any other institution in society. But *should* the feminists have their way? That is the ultimate question.

WOMEN ARE PEOPLE TOO

7

This book began with the statement that if the feminists are wrong, then their movement is dangerous and ought to be opposed; but if what the feminists say is correct, we ought to help change things. In subsequent chapters we examined what women's liberation is saying and concluded much of it is all too true. To try to conceal this, as some do, by dismissing feminists as a group of left-wingers, malcontents, and sexual deviants is not accurate, intellectually honest, or Christian. And even if feminists *were* all these things, and more besides, that would not affect the truth of their point, for example, that women are the victims of patently unjust employment practices. All but the hopelessly hardened misogynist will have to accept at least some of what the feminists are saying.

Freedom of Definition

But how much? To answer that, we must define the aims of women's liberation. To assume as many men do that feminists want women to be like men is a neat bit of male supremacist reasoning. The speaker acknowledges, if only unconsciously, that men have a clearly desirable position in our society and he lets his ego show by taking it for granted there are no other viable alternatives. If one listens to feminism instead of to its critics, the single most important proposition—one that would likely gain support from nearly all quarters of the movement—is that women should be allowed to define themselves and be free to seek the goals they aspire to. This is at the heart of the movement and this is something that can be warmly received by the church. Christians live under the immoderate injunction to love their neighbors as themselves. To put things this way is to speak of freedom as well as love, for to love another as one's self is to refuse to make an object of the other; it is to require one's own autonomy for the other. To put things this way is also to speak of justice as well as love, for to love another as one's self is to demand for the other the same threshold to fulfillment.

There are a number of important objections to endorsing women's liberation in this way and we ought to consider them in turn. The most general rests on the assumption that there is no need for raising the consciousness of society to help or even allow women to define themselves: women are *already* free. To say this is to wilfully ignore the vast array of purely social forces that come to bear on women, forces we have discussed in earlier chapters.

Usually, though not always, the claim that women *are* free to define themselves is associated with the assumption that women do not because they are already defined by nature. A woman, if not necessarily inferior, is in essence different from a man, uniquely qualified for a certain place, one that is basically secondary to a man's. Women provide the nurturant and emotional qualities to warm human existence while men manage the manipulative, analytical, and rational to keep society progressing. As we have seen, this is a naive equating of gender

and sex—of ascribed qualities we usually label masculine and feminine and innate physiological characteristics of male and female. Probably the most moving rejoinder was made by Sojourner Truth, a black woman who sat quietly through a feminist meeting in 1851 until a clergyman spoke, emphasizing the subsidiary and dependent character of women. Then she rose and said,

> *The man over there says women need to be helped into carriages and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages or over mud-puddles, or gives me the best place. . . . And ain't I a woman? Look at my arm! . . . I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me. And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man—when I could get it—and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen them most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me. And ain't I a woman?* [1]

At least two points may be stressed here. One is that the conservative view of women (and men) cannot be considered the distinctly Christian response—though it has been a response of Christians. That distinction is a vital one. The church has frequently not only mirrored attitudes of its culture toward women, but in fact has sanctioned and provided a theological rationalization to support them. By peering into darker corners long unscrutinized in the church, feminists have forced Christians to face cultural infusions accepted in the past and perpetuated in the present. Equally important, they have brought to light alternate paths of biblical interpretation not chosen in the past, but still available for exploration.

The other point is that those who are convinced women are defined by nature should relax, for if this is so they have nature on their side and the feminists will defeat themselves. One early 20th century feminist pointed out that if, when women design bridges or argue a court case or operate on a patient, the bridges fall down and the cases fail and the patients die, very few people will continue to educate or hire women as engineers and lawyers and surgeons. The matter will be

closed. The consistent anti-feminist who is serious in his convictions should serenely ignore the feminists, confident that if given enough rope they will hang themselves.

But, some will object, feminism simply is not that benign. In the course of proving to themselves what we already know about them, women will wreck the family and warp the lives of millions of children. The paradox here, though, is that usually those who make this argument have long been outspoken in attacking the ills of pre-feminist family life and contemporary mores generally. We do not presently have the best of all possible worlds, they have pointed out, and we can agree: we do not have some garden of Eden in which feminism now rears its guileful head to traduce modern Eves. There is abundant evidence of family pathology, very little of it traceable to women's liberation. In fact, as Betty Friedan and others have pointed out, there is reason to believe that women who have too few outlets other than their families cause serious problems by over-identification with their children or their husbands.[2]

It would help if we recognize that an attack on the nuclear family is in itself not necessarily an attack on stable relations and long-term commitment between a woman and a man. Nor is it a devaluation of children. In the case of at least a good number of feminists it is instead a reflection of a great concern for meaningful adult relationships and a search for a pattern of child-rearing that escapes the apparent emptiness of young lives in affluent America. Concerned observers have long been saying that the family is in trouble, that for the good of children child-rearing should be more equally shared by mother and father. Why reject the feminist who says the same thing and has the courage and the perception to see that rhetoric will get nowhere until basic family structures are changed?

It would also help if we recognize that the goal here is variation and flexibility in family forms, not a single standard to be imposed on all women and men. Furthermore, the family is a much more resilient and entrenched entity than many (alarmist commentators and some feminists alike) believe. We should be able to face with equanimity the prospect of experimentation with alter-

nate forms, watching patiently for results that deserve wider implementation. We have only recently discovered we have been paying exorbitant hidden ecological costs for our high standard of living, and we know now we shall have to alter our conduct. Similarly, our standard of living has enabled especially the middle and upper class suburb to segregate the nuclear family to an extent unusual in history. Now, via the feminists, we may be discovering that women have paid a high hidden psychological price for this style of life.

Yet another objection to an endorsement of the core proposition that women should be allowed to define themselves is to accuse women's liberation of falling into the perennial heresy, utopian thinking. The doubters point out that people will never be "free"; it is the human condition to be under some bondage. In one way, however, such an objection misses the point. If there is no absolute freedom in the human condition, there are certainly levels of relative freedom. To be able "to choose one's own bondage" is to be freer than to have a bondage imposed.[3] It would be a vast improvement to be freer of the enormous pressure by which society imposes a status, a bondage, on human beings who happen to be born female.

This, however, may not answer the objection fully, for some will grant that women may not be free to choose their own bondage, but point out that many men are not either. If there is great pressure on women to define success in terms of being a wife and mother, there is also great pressure to define male success as a well-paying job and promotions. For example, regardless of his aptitudes and inclinations, a man would have to be singularly immune to our society to choose to stay home and care for children. This criticism however turns out to be agreement with women's liberation. In fact the proper name for the movement might better be "people's liberation," if this did not remove the bite from the indictment and shift attention from those who are most victimized by sexual stereotyping. Given the complimentarity between the current roles of the two sexes, a change in attitudes towards one inevitably involves a change toward the other. Altering sex roles will mean that men will

have to take on some of the burdens previously carried by women. But a more positive, and penetrating, analysis is to stress the increased freedom men should gain in violating current social norms of masculinity.

A Listening Church

There is a story from mule-skinner days of the driver accused of mistreating a mule by beating it over the head with a 2x4. "You don't understand," was his defense. "Before a mule will do anything you have to get its attention." Faced by centuries in which society failed even to notice the problem, feminists have had to resort to strong rhetoric and strenuous measures to be taken seriously. By forcing public consciousness of little-recognized facts, by insisting society think through its assumptions, the women's liberation movement has demonstrated that the feminist perspective has much to teach. The church, too, can learn, and Christians should listen with patience and humility. Even without the ordination issue, it is apparent the church has been guilty of gross discrimination in employment practices—notice the sexual division in photographs of officials and employees at church headquarters and publishing houses—and has contributed to concepts that confine women to certain roles and images in society.

What Christians may learn about themselves from the contemporary women's movement is not entirely negative, however. Church people have spoken out in the past against the extensive sexualization of American culture. Topless waitresses to sell food, lynx-eyed models to sell cars, bosomy girls to sell magazines—the list is endless. Christians should recognize women's liberation as a contemporary movement that has been outspoken against the same sexualization. "Stop Exploiting Women" scrawled over a roadside billboard featuring a bikini-clad girl advertising milk likely does as much as many more conventional sermons on Sunday mornings to force people to see what they look at. At least some Christians have been saying that American advertising, for instance, is objectionable because it exploits sex. What the feminists are saying is that the advertising is objectionable be-

cause it exploits women. The church could broaden and strengthen its critique by recognizing the validity and affinity of the feminist perception.

This should not be done, however, without recognizing that the feminist critique goes deeper than what most Christians have up to now had in mind when speaking of sexualization. Those who have been most outspoken here have usually been most conservative in their definition of women. But what we should begin to see via the feminist perspective is that we cannot have things both ways. We cannot define woman primarily by her sex and then with any consistency proceed to lambast the sexual preoccupation of our society. We cannot because this all is cut of the same cloth. The depersonalization and exploitation of women most obvious in slick "men's" magazines—but visible also in almost all mass media—is part and parcel of the definition of women by traditional means as primarily female.

Some will cry foul here claiming, rightly, they were talking about chaste wives and mothers, not bunny playmates. But that will not escape the charge. To define a human being primarily as a wife and mother is to identify her first of all by sex. And this is precisely the identification that makes possible, even likely, the exploitation of female sexuality. Traditionally the wife and the bunny playmate are at opposite ends of the scale. What feminism does is to suggest that insofar as sex is the primary identification, the image of wife leads logically to the image of playmate, particularly in an era when the function of maternity is reduced to a few years. In other words, it may very well be that to attempt to combat the bunny playmate image by emphasizing woman's role as wife and mother is a self-defeating tactic. What is really needed is a definition of women that is not primarily sexual.

Attacking Men or Assaulting Machismo?

A point frequently made especially by more militant feminists is that our society, controlled by men, is in critical condition and that we can no longer continue with masculine attitudes toward such problems as our environment and war. For the future of humankind femi-

nine attitudes must gain the upper hand. Given the ecological crisis and the potential for nuclear destruction, there is not much point in debating that manipulative and domineering traits need to be supplanted by nuturant and accommodating approaches. But some go much further than that, blaming men for our predicament: women would not have enmeshed us in the Vietnam debacle; women would not have created a technology that chokes us to death. Sometimes this is put in a restrained way—"Women are not more moral than men; we're only uncorrupted by power." Sometimes it rests on the assumption that, morally at least, women are superior to men—"Men and men alone have set into motion the monsters that destroy us and the planet."[4] There is within the liberation movement an explicit element of man-hating and lesbianism. Masturbation and homosexuality, as we saw in chapter 4, are felt to have the double advantage of expressing solidarity with other women and of eliminating the need for men in sexual pleasure.

Judging from the reaction of many (women as well as men), hints of lesbianism and man-hating bring down upon the movement automatic condemnation. But Christians should be on guard here—not hesitant in naming what is at odds with Christian ideals, but careful to make sure the target is clearly visible and the weapons appropriate. When people quickly swing into attacks on lesbianism as soon as the topic of women's liberation comes up, it is time to be watchful, for concentrating on lesbianism is a good way to excuse not taking the central aspects of the movement seriously (it's *their* nasty problem, not ours). As important as it is to some in the movement, idealizing lesbianism is not the core of feminist thought. For the unscrupulous opponent, to attack lesbianism is a good smear tactic, a way of discrediting by association rather than reasoned refutation; it is a good way to avoid the work of thinking. Rather than showing zeal to denounce sin, this type of attack may reveal male insecurities (how could they begin to get along without us?).

Having said that, one must go on. The ultimate in humiliation of feminists would be to treat their ideas as in a different category than other ideas; as somehow not

to be seriously wrestled with. Particularly those who sympathize with a minority movement must be aware that a subtle way of demeaning it is to act as if it is not strong and sound enough to bear criticism.

To meet assumptions of female inferiority with compensatory claims of superiority; to meet subjection with a strategy of exclusion—these tactics are understandable given the circumstances. As tedious as antipathy to men is at times, it is no more difficult to fathom than separatism and militant rhetoric coming from some in the black community. But to live up to its potential as a positive force for the whole society, women's liberation must move beyond this stage. Good reasons for doing so rest in theology, history, the movement's own most radical thrust, and its inherent needs.

First of all, if women are creatures of God who are to be loved with justice and freedom, then so are men. If Christianity makes love an imperative, it also insists on the basic reality of sin, something that knows no sexual boundaries. If women are no worse than men, they are potentially no better either. Historically, too, there are reasons to argue against overcompensating in attacking male supremacist ideas. In the Progressive Era at the turn of the century, itself a period of social ferment, feminists also sometimes argued from the premises that women are innocent of complicity in the power structure and morally superior to men. Women, they said, should be given the vote to clean up politics and reform society. Of course woman's suffrage did no such thing and in fact the failure of feminist predictions may have contributed to disillusionment with feminism after suffrage was won.

As we have seen, probably the most exciting aspect of the movement is the fundamental respect for individuals, the rejection of stereotypes, and the insistence on seeing a woman as a human being with an infinite range of capabilities. This refusal to categorize on the basis of sex is a precious thing. But it is betrayed by automatic categorizing and stereotyping of men on the basis of sex. To demean the essential personhood of a woman is indefensible. To demean the essential personhood of a man is no less so.

Finally, whatever the hopes of some militants, most

women appear to be committed to heterosexuality and to look forward to husband and children. Possibly, just possibly, this may change. But in the immediate future, to speak of female separatism and aversion to men as touchstones of orthodoxy is likely to guarantee a small constituency for what should be a mass movement. This is connected with a further point. There has been among some a tendency to assume that any woman who chooses a conventional marriage, children and suburban homemaking has obviously been brainwashed by society. But if it is wrong to insist that a woman does and must gain her identity and fulfillment only from motherhood, family and the home, it is wrong as well to insist no liberated woman can. To demand the option of different life patterns and at the same time eliminate one possibility which might be satisfying and fulfilling for some is neither consistent nor wise. As one woman put it, "women must witness to tolerance as well as demand it." Fortunately one of the strengths of the movement is a commitment at least in ideals to working with women where they are, and as the movement matures, signs multiply that activists are listening carefully and tolerantly to all kinds of women with very different life styles.

Abortion: Law and Morality

One of the planks in the feminist platform that has drawn the most ire is the insistence, even by moderates, that decisions on abortion must be solely in the hands of the pregnant woman, or at most, the woman and her physician. The adoption of this stand is unfortunately inevitable: "unfortunately" because abortion is hotly debated and is surely one of the knottiest of contemporary ethical dilemmas; "inevitable" because of female anatomy and the burdensome weight of an unwanted pregnancy.

Probably it is best to begin with facts on which all should be able to agree. We know that large numbers of women subject themselves to expensive and dangerous illegal abortions every year, regardless of the law and the threat of complications and death that become a reality for many. We also know present laws are in effect

discriminatory against poor women who do not have the resources to secure an illicit or out-of-state abortion. And it is clear there are millions of women who in good conscience do not believe abortion is wrong. These are strong arguments for making abortion *laws* much more permissive, even though, it should be admitted, they do not speak to the morality of abortion itself.

Thus, as Daniel Callahan concludes in a massive study of abortion, it is helpful to distinguish between law and morality. This is particularly true in a fluid and highly pluralistic society such as ours. Perhaps an example may help to illustrate a differentiation between law and morality. Legally we do not forbid people to substantially increase their risk of early death by smoking. Morally, however, we may say that such a decision, though uncoerced, should be made along certain guidelines, and we may engage in advertising and educational campaigns to persuade people of our view. In the matter of abortion, we may recognize the pluralism of our society and the problems caused by current laws by being permissive legally, and at the same time insist that casual or selfish or ill-informed decisions for abortion are morally reprehensible, in fact incomprehensible, to us.

Decisions in abortion involve weighing conflicting rights of the mother and of the fetus. We are not talking here about easy choices between good and evil, but about choosing the least evil alternative. But who is to do the choosing? And on what basis? Feminists who insist it is the woman's right to make the final decision have, in terms of the law, a sound position. Of all those capable of forming a decision in any given case, the woman is most in a position to judge the validity of her wishes and it is she who must abide by those decisions. She should have the freedom to act as a responsible, independent individual and to hold control over her reproductive processes. To forbid a woman an abortion is to coerce her into bearing a child. It can be argued that *legally* such coercion is not justifiable; it is not essential to the domestic safety of the community.[5]

But as already noticed, this says nothing about the second question, the morality of abortion. On what basis is the woman to make her decision? In facing an oppo-

sition emphasizing the rights of the fetus and the immutability of the law, the feminists have understandably concentrated on the rights of the woman and the relativity of the law. This has its dangers, for there is a temptation to absolutize the rights of women, and rhetorically at least, to ignore the reality that one is dealing with a form of developing human life. More important, this does not provide very much help to the woman who must make the decision once it is hers. To be free to get an abortion may not actually be very free if, first, there is no supportive machinery available to help in making a satisfying decision and second, if there are no other viable alternatives. Unlike abortion opponents who all too often ban abortions and at the same time fail to provide psychological or financial relief for the burden they have forced on women, feminists advocating change in abortion laws have also been outspoken in advocacy of aid for those with children. This should be recognized to their great credit. What would help strengthen the movement and also help alleviate Christian disquiet on this score would be more explicit serious wrestling with the ethics of abortion once the responsibility is the woman's, wrestling that displays a profound appreciation for the sanctity of human life in all its forms.

Many may find the views on abortion suggested here quite unpalatable. Both those who see a complete individual at the moment of conception and those who see only a piece of tissue will reject this alternative out of hand, for it steers a middle course by seeing human life as a series of developing potentials. Rather than thrash about further in this particular thicket, it may be helpful to stress an irenic point. The matter would by no means be settled, but the tenor of its discussion would be more civil if everyone would concede that abortion is an issue in which cogent arguments can be marshalled by thoughtful, sensitive people on all sides. Thus, for feminists to suggest that all who cannot agree to abortion on demand are motivated by a desire to keep women down is imperceptive and unjust—as foolish and infuriating as things said by some opponents are. And for those who oppose abortion on demand to accuse abortion advocates of hating children and of desiring a life of ease

and sexual profligacy is equally unjust, as calloused as things said by some proponents are. As the controversy continues and battle lines likely harden still more, one might also ask, is diehard opposition worthwhile if people in the church must betray its ideals by the use of coercion, distortion, and scare tactics? Is diehard advocacy worthwhile if it alienates potential support and fixes on abortion as the 19th century fastened itself to suffrage?

In discussing responses to contemporary feminism, we have in this chapter stressed tolerance and respect for the feminist proposition that women should be free to define themselves and their aspirations. But more is involved and that we must turn to in the last chapter.

BEYOND MERE TOLERANCE

8

Behind the proposition that women should be free to define themselves is the acute and accurate perception that they are not, that they suffer oppression both personal and institutional. To be candid, then, an appropriate response to what women's liberation has pointed out amounts to a social revolution, for anti-feminism is deeply imbedded in the very core of our society. To uproot it will require working on a great many fronts (which may make diversity in the movement an asset, for many interests and aptitudes are required). To uproot it will also take time, although that is dangerous to say because it can so easily be misunderstood as counseling delays and complacency. The point is instead that what is required is a tenacious commitment for the long haul.

Many whites escape being confronted with their participation in racism because they are so removed from blacks in residence and employment. But this kind of

escape is not open to men in the case of feminism. On a personal level men will have to confront the extent to which male supremacy has become an unconscious part of their thinking. Many a liberal husband prides himself on helping around the house and encouraging his wife to dabble in amateur arts and volunteer service. But helping at home he defines as assisting with "her" work; he would be upset if his wife developed a consuming interest outside the home; and it has never occurred to him to question the assumption that his work is more important than any his wife does or could do.

Men will also have to come to grips with their complicity in education, employment, and consumption patterns that discriminate against women. And they will have to reckon with the extent to which their images of self and work and family require women to be used as leverage.

There are a great many men, as there are a great many women, who can honestly say about the feminist argument, "I never thought of that before." Such a statement is not the avowal of alliance, but it is a beginning in consciousness-raising. A man's reason and sense of justice and perhaps love *may* produce discernible male support for the feminist position. (Or when these forces do not produce a recruit, they may produce an opposition weakened by a guilty conscience.) There is an argument, in sum, for persevering in the often frustrating task of attempting to communicate with, instead of writing off, just under half the population.

But we need not be naive here. Because there are positive advantages for them in the status quo, many men will do as little as they can to help feminists. Politics in the broadest sense is absolutely essential for women's liberation. An informed sense of outrage is also essential. It is easy to get so enmeshed in intra-feminist controversies and historical background and contemporary statistics that we forget the main point. What is being done to women today is wrong. One reviewer put things well in writing about a feminist book she felt was too conciliatory. The author, said the reviewer, "is too accepting, too willing to leave for time what can only be healed by

strong, tough action. To forgive our enemies is fine, but . . . [the author] doesn't acknowledge that what's been done to us is evil enough to warrant forgiveness. She denies her own anger, and therefore ours. And we need that anger." [1]

Rejoinders to Responses

At the beginning of this book we noted that some women are so threatened in their self-identity by feminism that they cannot cope constructively with it. But many more women are simply equivocal about women's liberation; they do not condemn it, but they do not commit themselves to it either. There are a great many reasons for this attitude, but most of these women would likely fall into one of three categories.

First, some women react negatively to the life styles and vocabulary of especially the younger, militant feminists. Perhaps the best response to this group is that if something is basically right, it is basically right, regardless of the appearance or speech of those who advocate it. Furthermore the movement is too diverse for any particular costume or rhetoric or strategy to be exclusively orthodox.

A second grouping of women, often those with jobs outside the home, do not object to women's liberation as much as they dismiss its relevance for themselves. They insist they are already liberated. One woman stated it this way: " . . . as a pastor's wife and the mother of three teenagers . . . [and as] a health educator who has equal rights and equal pay with the men around her . . . I am neither a part of the oppressed majority nor do I belong to the advocates of a subdued frilly womanhood." [2]

Several observations need to be made. One is best put as a question: is she really as free as she thinks? In the quotation, the striking thing is that even in her disclaimers the writer identified herself first through a man and children. Women's liberation is talking about a great deal more than equal pay. It is talking also about the formation of identities and roles, those of women, and

those of men as well. Women who dismiss the relevance of feminism have neatly side-stepped the insight that what is necessary are collective, political solutions; part of the problem is that women are kept divided and think of themselves as individuals with problems to be solved as individuals. The old cliché that one is only as free as the least free member of one's group is germane here. The key, then, is who is in one's group. What some women fail to realize is that in the end they do not decide who is in their group. Men do.

Another thing that needs to be said in reply is that women who have made the grade, at least in their own eyes, have a responsibility to help others. The self-proclaimed liberated woman is often closely connected by marriage or other relationship with men who pride themselves on being liberal and who are influential in the community. Her stance toward women's liberation is crucial in aiding (sometimes forcing) these men to see that liberating women involves basic changes in male orientation. The self-proclaimed liberated woman is also often an active member of organizations such as the League of Women Voters and the American Association of University Women, and can do much to confront these ostensibly women's groups with the need for organized action in behalf of women. Finally, women who dismiss the relevance of contemporary feminism often work in positions that are the foci of the socialization process. A teacher, for example, may be exceedingly influential in contradicting social stereotypes for the young, sometimes, on upper levels, by explicit confrontation, but more often by indirection.

The third group, which is probably the largest, includes women who are hesitant about the current movement because they feel happy being wives and mothers and find this, perhaps along with involvement in some church or community organization or even a job, an engrossing life. There is little time left over to staff the barricades of women's liberation. But that depends on how the barricades are defined. A woman engrossed in being wife and mother has relatives and friends of both sexes, people who will be affected by her openness to the

feminist perspective. She is also a voter who can lend support in letters and at the polls to passage of legislation for such causes as day-care centers and equitable tax laws to aid women who have chosen a different life style than her own. As a voter she can help increase the diversity of possibilities open to women. She has a husband and thus the challenge to work out a relationship that respects the integrity of both. She can help educate him, in the process helping to free him from being trapped by myths about women—and men.

She has children and thus is in a key position to counteract the pressure society puts on girls and boys to act out certain sexually-determined roles. A conscientious mother screens her children's television viewing for violence; she can do the same for sexism. She explains to her children the evils of racial prejudice; she can do the same for sexual prejudice. She can be a voice in bringing into the school system an awareness of the downgrading of women in curricular tracking and in texts. She can work toward exposing her children to a wide variety of attractive adult models of both sexes who violate social expectations. The list is nearly endless because of the endemic nature of the problem.

Most of all, a woman engrossed in being a wife and mother is a person in her own right. She is not *only* John's wife and Connie's mother. It is in recognition of this and not a diminution of motherhood that she ought to think through the way she identifies herself, particularly in view of the relatively few years child-care occupies her life. In arriving at a conscious identity and in reflecting on its implications, the resources of other women engaged in the same process are likely to be helpful.

The substance of these observations about different groups of women is thus the same: organized political action is essential to women's liberation, but to have the pervasive impact it should have requires as well the involvement of women where they are.

Unless nearly unimaginable events somehow derail contemporary feminism, it has the potential to be easily

one of the most important movements of our time, for it cleaves through our society in a radical way. That it is in flux, less a program than a dynamic perspective, is not a debit, but all the more reason for women to join and influence it. However threatening to some, its essential goals are both generous and humane. It is something to participate in with excitement and hope.

NOTES

CHAPTER 1

1. Philip Goldberg, "Are Women Prejudiced Against Women?," *Trans-Action,* vol. 5, April 1968, pp. 28-30.
2. *Look Magazine,* February 24, 1970, p. 10.
3. *Look Magazine,* March 19, 1971, p. 16.
4. Jo Freeman, "Growing Up Girlish," *Trans-Action,* vol. 8, November/December 1970, p. 42.

CHAPTER 2

1. Quoted by Cynthia Fuchs Epstein, *Woman's Place: Options and Limits in Professional Careers* (Berkeley, 1970), p. 64.
2. *Hearings, Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments, Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. Senate,* Ninety-First Congress, 1970, p. 45.
3. Alleen Pace Nilsen, "Women in Children's Literature," *College English,* vol. 32, May 1971, p. 919

4. "Status is the Name of the Game," *Trans-Action,* vol. 8, February 1971, p. 10.
5. Matina Horner, "Woman's Will to Fail," *Psychology Today,* vol. 3, November 1969, pp. 36-38, 62
6. Quoted in *Women's Rights Law Reporter,* vol. 1, July/August 1971, p. 39.
7. Judith M. Bardwick, *Psychology of Women: A Study of Bio-Cultural Conflicts* (New York, 1971), p. 216.

CHAPTER 3

1. See Philippe Ariés, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (New York, 1962) and William L. O'Neill, *Everyone Was Brave: The Rise and Fall of Feminism in America* (Chicago, 1969).
2. The text is available in *Up From the Pedestal: Selected Writings in the History of American Feminism,* ed. Aileen S. Kraditor (Chicago, 1968), pp. 50-51.
3. Quoted by Mary Benson, *Women in Eighteenth-Century America: A Study of Opinion and Social Usage* (New York, 1935), p. 246.
4. Quoted in Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," *American Quarterly,* vol. 18, Summer 1966, p. 160.
5. The prominence of these themes is studied in the Welter article just cited.
6. Welter, p. 160.
7. Kraditor, pp. 184-88.
8. The campaign is carefully described in Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States* (New York, 1968).
9. See Alice Rossi, "Equality Between the Sexes: An Immodest Proposal," and other articles in *The Woman in America,* ed. Robert Jay Lifton (Boston, 1967).

CHAPTER 4

1. *The Ladder,* vol. 15, June/July 1971, p. 36.
2. *Spectre,* vol. 1, May/June, 1971, p. 6.
3. "NOW Bill of Rights," *Sisterhood Is Powerful,* ed. Robin Morgan (New York, 1970), pp. 512-14.
4. Germaine Greer, *The Female Eunuch* (New York, 1970), p. 294.

5. Linda Gordon, "Functions of the Family," *Voices From Women's Liberation,* ed. Leslie B. Tanner (New York, 1970), p. 182.
6. Gordon, p. 187.
7. Robin Morgan, "Introduction," *Sisterhood Is Powerful,* p. xxxiv.
8. Morgan, p. xxxi.
9. "Editorial," *Women, A Journal of Liberation,* vol. 2, Winter 1971, p. 1.
10. Marge Piercy, "The Grand Coolie Dam," *Sisterhood Is Powerful,* p. 429.
11. Rebecca Taksel, "All My Best Friends," *Women, A Journal of Liberation,* vol. 2, Winter 1971, p. 55.
12. Beverly Jones and Judith Brown, "Toward a Female Liberation Movement," *Voices From Women's Liberation,* p. 400.

CHAPTER 5

1. The whooping crane comparison originated with Illinois Republican Charlotte Reid, quoted in Caroline Bird, *Born Female: The High Cost of Keeping Women Down* (New York, 1969), p. 35. The handiest guide to statistics on women and employment is *Background Facts on Women Workers in the United States,* published by the Women's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor. Unless otherwise indicated, my statistics are taken from this source. On the legal status of women, see Leo Kanowitz, *Women and the Law: The Unfinished Revolution* (Albuquerque, 1969). The Harvard figures are from Ann Banks, "Present Company Excepted," *Brown Alumni Monthly,* vol. 71, January 1971, p. 20.
2. "Women in College," *Trans-Action,* vol. 8, January 1971, p. 16.
3. Cited by Caroline Bird, p. 86.
4. Quoted by Bird, p. 68.
5. Chester Hunt, "Female Occupational Roles and Urban Sex Ratios in the United States, Japan and the Philippines," *Social Forces,* vol. 43, March 1965, pp. 407-417.
6. Germaine Greer, *The Female Eunuch* (New York, 1970), p. 43.
7. Marijean Suelzle, "Women in Labor," *Trans-Action,* vol. 8, November/December 1970, p. 55.
8. Quoted by Bird, p. 130.
9. *Civil Liberties,* April 1971, p. 8.

CHAPTER 6

1. *Off Our Backs,* May 6, 1971, p. 1.
2. This and similar statements by other early church fathers are quoted, with citations to the original, by Mary Daly, *The Church and the Second Sex* (New York, 1968), p. 45.
3. Horace Bushnell, *Women's Suffrage: The Reform Against Nature* (New York, 1871), p. 136.
4. Elizabeth Janeway, *Man's World, Woman's Place: A Study in Social Mythology* (New York, 1971), p. 7.
5. *Lutheran Witness,* vol. 48, 1929, pp. 234-35.
6. *Convention Workbook* [Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod], 1969, p. 519.
7. For a general discussion, including this option, see Raymond Tiemeyer, *The Ordination of Women* (Minneapolis, 1970).
8. The quotation is from Gerhard L. Belgum, cited in "A Minority Opinion," *Event,* vol. 10, December 1970, p. 27.
9. Margaret Sittler Ermarth, *Adam's Fractured Rib: Observations on Women in the Church* (Philadelphia, 1970), p. 105.
10. Peggy Ann Way, "An Authority of Possibility for Women in the Church," *Women's Liberation and the Church: The New Demand for Freedom in the Life of the Christian Church,* ed. Sarah Bentley Doely (New York, 1970), p. 86. See also Mary Daly, "After the Death of God the Father," *Commonweal,* March 12, 1971, pp. 7-11.

CHAPTER 7

1. *History of Woman Suffrage,* eds. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony and Mathilda Joslyn Gage (New York, 1969, first published in 1881), I, p. 116.
2. *The Feminine Mystique* (New York, 1964), pp. 270-98.
3. The phrase I borrow from Peggy Ann Way, via Donna Shaper, "The Temptation of Women by the Church," *Dialog,* vol. 10, Spring 1971, p. 133.
4. Gloria Steinem, quoted in *St. Anthony Messenger,* vol. 78, March 1971, p. 32; *It Ain't Me Babe,* vol. 2, April 1971, p. 3.
5. For a much fuller discussion of these points, see Daniel Callahan, *Abortion: Law, Choice, and Morality* (New York, 1970).

CHAPTER 8

1. Karen Lindsey, *Everywoman,* vol. 2, Sept. 10, 1971, p. 9.
2. Anne Jordheim, "Women in Confusion," *Lutheran Forum,* vol. 5, May 1971, p. 7.

FOR FURTHER READING

This book has failed if it has not encouraged readers to take a look for themselves at feminists and feminism. The suggestions below are intended to aid easy access; most of the books have their own bibliographies and suggested reading lists to help those interested in delving further into any given area. Virtually all are available in paperback.

For readers intrigued by the history of feminism, the following should be helpful. The subtitles indicate contents accurately. All are lively reading. Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States* (New York: Atheneum, 1968); Aileen S. Kraditor, *Up From the Pedestal: Selected Writings in the History of American Feminism* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1968); Aileen Kraditor, *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965); William L. O'Neill, *Everyone Was Brave: The Rise and Fall of Feminism in America* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1969).

Probably the best place for the average reader without prior acquaintance to start sampling contemporary

feminism is with the main works of the moderates. The classic is Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: Dell, 1964), a book that still merits reading, overlong and prolix as it is. More recent and succinct statements of the same basic themes are by Caroline Bird, *Born Female: The High Cost of Keeping Women Down* (New York: Pocket Books, 1968), and Cynthia Epstein, *Woman's Place: Options and Limits in Professional Careers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970). Alice Rossi has published a number of exceedingly thoughtful and perceptive articles; the one most frequently cited is reprinted in *The Woman in America*, ed. Robert J. Lifton (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967).

More radical approaches may be sampled in Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* (New York: Doubleday, 1970)—readers offended by the scabrous quotations of chapter one should begin with chapter two—and in two collections of documents: *Sisterhood Is Powerful*, ed. Robin Morgan (New York: Vintage, 1970) and *Voices From Women's Liberation*, ed. Leslie B. Tanner (New York: Signet, 1970). Still another source is women's liberation newspapers, which spring up and sometimes die with incredible speed. Current lists of such newspapers, with addresses and subscription rates, are available from KNOW, Box 10197, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15232.

A regular newsletter covering most of the movement is published by The Spokeswoman, 5464 South Shore Drive, Chicago, Ill. 60615.

An excellent selection of recent articles is collected in *Woman in Sexist Society: Studies in Power and Powerlessness*, ed. Vivian Gornick and Barbara K. Moran (New York: Basic Books, 1971).

There are not as yet a great many recent books on women and the church. *Women's Liberation and the Church: The New Demand for Freedom in the Life of the Christian Church*, ed. Sarah B. Doely (New York: Association Press, 1970) covers a broad front. Two that concentrate most on Lutheran ordination are Margaret Sittler Ermarth, *Adam's Fractured Rib: Observations on Women in the Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), and Raymond Tiemeyer, *The Ordination of Women* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1970).

$2.50

AFTER EVE

Trying to find out what women's lib is all about is like opening the door on a large, noisy party, listening for a moment, then slamming the door shut again. This book sifts through the voices, separates them, so that readers can understand clearly and evaluate what is happening.

Alan Graebner writes here as a sympathetic reporter, presenting an honest study of what today's women are trying to accomplish in their move for equality of the sexes. Neither condemning, pooh-poohing, nor inciting women to burn their bras, Graebner traces the history of feminism in the U.S. from the bloomer movements of the 19th century through suffrage to its contemporary forms. He explains various factions of the movement, examines social conditioning and discrimination, analyzes structural hurdles to equality in our society, and argues that women should be free to define themselves. The result is a careful and objective analysis from both a historical and a Christian point of view.

ALAN GRAEBNER, Ph.D. from Columbia University in social and intellectual history, is professor of history at the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul, Minnesota. The author of many articles on historical subjects, he is much in demand as a speaker on femi movements in American history. He formerly taught history at C cordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota.

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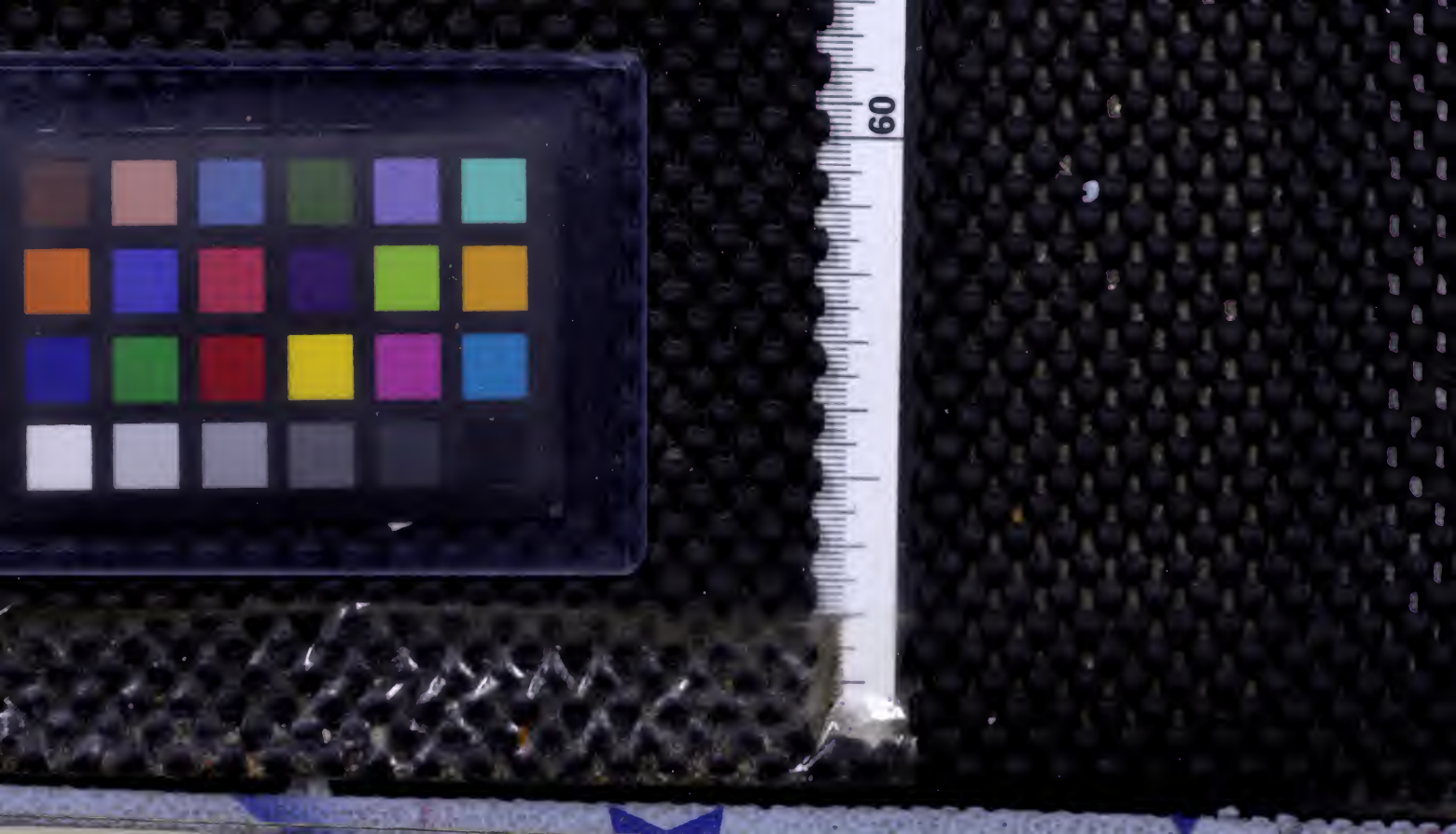
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